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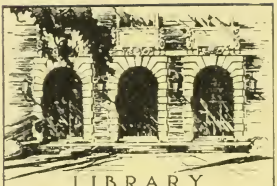

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A

WINTER IN LONDON;

OR,

SKETCHES OF FASHION:

A NOVEL,

IN THREE VOLUMES,

BY

T. S. SURR.

..... "Truths like these
Will none offend, whom 'tis a praise to please,"

YOUNG.

VOL. III.

London:
PRINTED FOR RICHARD PHILLIPS, BRIDGE-STREET,
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A

WINTER IN LONDON.

CHAPTER I.

SIR ALFRED'S STORY.

THE letter which sir Alfred Beauchamp had intrusted to the care of Dr. Hoare, to be delivered to lady Roseville, contained a narrative of events which happened subsequent to his separation from that lady, at Darlington Hall, on the eve of his departure for the continent. Having described his interview with his brother at Florence, and related the circumstance of their invitation to sup at the villa of the signora Belloni, the letter proceeded thus:—

"We had not penetrated far into the

wood ere we were attacked by banditti: surprise and terror, at an event so unexpected, were quickly succeeded by emotions of a more painful nature. Montagu and myself were selected from our party by five of these assassins, and dragged into the most retired part of the wood. Their object was plainly murder, and not plunder. In vain my good and brave companion Montagu opposed his strength and skill in an unequal combat with three assailants: I saw him fall.

"But, oh God! how shall I continue this horrid narrative?

"I was defending myself against the two other assassins, when a third came up, whom, though disguised, I knew to be my brother. Palsied was my arm; I stood motionless, overcome with horrible amazement. He raised his sabre—I fell senseless and bleeding on the earth. I have no register in my memory of any scene or incident that occurred for some years after this event: all that passed was to me an intellectual blank. But

oh, what language can describe the horrors of the first returning dawn of reason? The place in which, as it were, I awoke from a long trance, was a dark room, or cell, from the roof of which hung a lamp shedding a dim light upon my almost naked limbs, that were stretched on straw. Starting with a shriek of heartfelt horror, I found myself fastened to the ground by a heavy chain round my loins. I felt a dreadful aching at the back of my head, which was covered with a plaster; and all at once the horrible events of that fatal night, when I beheld my brother in my murderer, rushed upon my mind.

"Horror upon horror crowded on me now in maddening succession, and the state of insensibility from which I recovered was, to the torment of that moment, as Paradise to Hell. Was I still in the power of Everard!—was I in Italy, or where else!—should I ever be released!—might I not be doomed to breathe my last in that drear dungeon, while Everard reported me already dead!—

Then came more dreadful and heart-rending thoughts; for then, Amelia, I thought upon thy tears, thy woes and miseries at my imagined death: and then I thought again upon the possibility that even at that moment another might have succeeded to the lost wretched Alfred in thy love. Swifter than they can be told these horrible ideas followed each other, till, raving with frantic suspense, I rattled the clanking chain that bound me to the ground: I screamed; I almost shook my dungeon with the loud yellings of despair, when in the space of what really might have been a minute, but which to me appeared an age, I heard a bolt drawn back: a vulgar-looking fellow appeared at an opening in the door, fearing to enter lest I had broken my chain.

"What's all this noise about?" demanded he in French.

"Where am I?—Open the door—come in—speak to me!" exclaimed I in the same language.

"Oh, oh," replied he, "you have found your tongue now, have you?"

"And then, perceiving my chain unbroken, he opened the door and approached me.

"Well, I'm glad you can speak at last; for while your dumb fit lasted there was no chance—"

"No chance of what?" said I.

"Of curing you, to be sure!" said he: "your head has been very wrong, very wrong indeed; you have been quite obstropulous; no getting any food into your mouth but by force."

"And could a brother see me in such a state unmoved?"

"Brother!—what brother?—Come, don't go off again; your poor head is not right yet."

"I am sensible indeed, good friend, whoever you are."

"Whoever I am!" said he; "come, that's good—who should I be but David Rivaux, under-gardener at the convent of St. Bernard?"

"Am I then in Switzerland?"

"To be sure you are; but I don't suppose you know how you got here, for you came in a way that frightened all the good fathers out of their wits. I shall never forget it as long as I live: it was a moon-light night, the convent was as silent as the grave, when a most tremendous knocking at the gate alarmed us all. Peter, our porter, being an old man, would not venture alone, so I went with him; and no sooner had we opened the gate than in rushed a madman, almost naked, with a link or two of chain fastened round his leg."

"And was I that unhappy being?"

"Aye, marry was you; and a terrible fright you put us in, and a terrible plague you have been ever since; for the abbot would not let us turn you out again upon the mountains."

"Blessed be he for his humanity!" said I.

"Amen, with all my heart, if you are really getting better!—But I must go fetch him to talk with you."

"Oh come again quickly," exclaimed I, "for mercy's sake!—or take me with you."

"He closed the door again upon me, and my terrors began to return. It might be as he had stated: but I had not the slightest recollection of any part of the scene he had described; nor of any thing that had occurred from the moment of my falling to the ground beneath my brother's sabre.

"Presently the abbot, with a mild benevolent countenance, approached me, and, holding out his hand, said—

"Unhappy stranger, you have been sore afflicted: has it pleased our Heavenly Father to restore thee?"

"Holy and benevolent father," said I, "I can give you no better proof of my restoration than by offering my heart's acknowledgment to you for your truly christian hospitality, if what this good man relates be true."

" He has stated facts," said the abbot: " our common safety compelled us to this restraint, which I trust in God's goodness is no longer necessary. David, remove this chain from our afflicted brother."

" David obeyed. I arose, and, leaning on an arm of each of them, walked forth into the air. It was the noon of a fine summer day. They led me to an alcove in the garden of the convent, and paid me every possible attention.

" We will not now, my son," said the good abbot, " lead back thy memory to perhaps the very cause of thy late malady, by too eager inquiries into thy story. Our care now, my brothers," continued he to the monks who thronged about us, " must be to further, by all the means in our power, the miraculous recovery which Providence has begun: let none, therefore, out of idle curiosity, question the unhappy stranger; but when his health and tranquillity are perfectly restored, he shall find my bosom open

to receive the confidence which he may think proper to repose there, and my heart ready to administer every consolation, which our holy religion affords to the sufferer by sorrow or even by crime."

"I am not criminal, good father," said I; "my calamity is the consequence of treacherous barbarity!"

"More thou shalt not now reveal," said the abbot. "Here, brother Francis, brother Dominic, bestow the offices of love; garments are needed for the stranger; a couch must be prepared; his person must be cleaned; his mind be soothed, and innocently amused. You know my wishes, and your own hearts will reward you for your labours by the sweetest emotions of our nature."

"Blessed be the memory of the good abbot of St. Bernard!

"It was evening ere the kindly officious monks permitted me a solitary moment for reflection.

"What course should I pursue! It ap-

peared that six months had elapsed since I had been admitted into the convent; that for a long time I had continued in a raving state of madness, shrieking and uttering incoherent exclamations in a language which none around me understood; most probably in English. From this paroxysm of my malady I sunk, they told me, into the melancholy state of inviolable silence. At length my case was made known to a celebrated German, who, in the course of his travels visited the convent, and whose skill discovered the small but fatal wound on my head, which, having been prematurely self-healed, had doubtless occasioned my mind's disease. He gave skilful directions for the fresh opening of the wound, and its mode of treatment, to the surgeon of the convent; and from the benevolence of this godlike unknown resulted the restoration of reason.

"Ah, how many children of misery and woe might the affluent, the skilful, and the

powerful rescue from the pallet of disease, the chains of madness, or the debtor's den, with but a thousandth part of the useless energy wasted in pleasure's toils!

" By a comparison of dates, I found that four years had intervened between the horrid deed of intended fratricide and my restoration. In that period of four years, what might not have happened! The suspense of doubt was insupportable; and being determined not to communicate my name or story until I had made myself acquainted with this period's events, I instantly resolved to quit the convent, privately, the first opportunity that offered, and, pennyless as I was, and meanly clad in some of the gardener's clothes, to beg my way to ——, where I knew the agent of an English house resided, of whom, without discovering myself, I might make the important inquiries.

" Oh, Amelia! how shall I proceed? Words will not paint, no, nor can they even faintly sketch, the feelings of my mind: I must

confine myself to the recital of events, and leave thy own just sensibilities to reflect those of thy Beauchamp's heart!

" Of the agent above alluded to I inquired——I cannot detail particulars—Let me then, with one gigantic effort, calmly write it down, that of this man I learnt all those events which you know followed my supposed burial; learnt that my brother rioted in his bloody spoils with the harlot that had excited him to murder! learnt that, if I appeared alive, my brother must have been arraigned by me for an intended murderer!—learnt that my patrimony was wasted; that my friend, my Montagu, was in the tomb; that my guardian, my second father was no more; and, oh! that—Amelia—was——!

" Was life then worth the sacrifice of a brother!—the everlasting stain of infamy upon my family and name!—life too without a Montagu!—without a Darlington!—without Amelia!—without Amelia?

said I!—Oh God!—To have bedewed her grave with nightly tears might have been worth existence!—but to behold her——!

"In every selfish point of view my motives were rather for destruction than existence: but when the superadded consideration of what Amelia would endure were the living Alfred to approach her while another was her husband, above all selfish influence, weighed in the scale of my determination, and I resolved—to die!

"I will not shed unnecessary gloom upon your present task, Amelia, by describing the emotions which preceded the rash attempt, nor the variety of melancholy devices which suggested themselves to my choice as means of suicide.

"You recollect I was in Switzerland: I strolled from the house of Mr. Mills, the agent, silent, gloomy, and without any settled design. Nearly the whole day I wandered, roaming as the path directed me, until, just as the sun was setting,

I reached the borders of a lake in the bosom of a valley. I started, I gazed around me. Mountains frowned upon me. The tranquillity of the scene appeared to mock the tumults of my bosom. No human creature was in sight, nor human habitation. I looked upwards, the sun fast sunk at the very instant behind the mountains; my heart chilled within me; I closed my eyes, and plunged into the lake. . . . . .

" I see you pale and shuddering at the horrible resolve. 'Twas base, 'twas impious, I own. That resolve, Amelia, though it has all that ever frail humanity could or can ever plead in its defence, I deem the foulest spot upon my soul: 'tis black, 'tis large—but the clemency of Heaven is unbounded; and I trust that the terrestrial demonstration of it which prevented the deed, will hereafter be extended to the design.

" As soon as, a second time, I awoke as it were from death, I perceived myself in bed, in a neat and comfortable chamber: and

among the attendants round me, to my astonishment, I saw the very agent whose house I had quitted in the morning. His humanity had suggested to him an apprehension, as he said, of my design from my countenance; and he had ordered two of his servants to follow me at a distance, and to watch my proceedings.

" He thus saved me from perdition. Still the wound in my head, and the state of my mind, rendered me for many days unable to quit my bed.

" Mr. Mills was by birth an American; he was a widower, and he had a daughter named Rebecca, who in humanity and benevolence equalled her good father, and added to these qualities a gentle softness of manners that soothed even me.

" Mr. Mills was a quaker; sincere, but not rigid or bigoted in his religious principles. Rebecca was a sweet enthusiast: she considered the incident of my deliverance from suicide, by her father, to be a call upon her exer-

tions for my conversion; and, in brief, she left untried no means to heal my bruised spirit, and to win me back to life. She in time gained her object, and I believe chiefly by this policy:—She not only engaged for herself, but for her father, that if I would consent to dwell under their roof, I should never be importuned, nor even once solicited, to speak upon the causes of my rash act, nor to divulge my name or story.

"This was indeed the essence, the very spirit of christian benevolence. Oh Amelia! its effects upon my heart were such, that, but for the early lessons of our dear Montagu, and some natural strength of mind, I am persuaded that I should have fallen into the belief, that the change I felt was an act of individual inspiration of the Almighty: as it was, I acknowledged its source with genuine devotion and gratitude, and only dissented from my amiable Rebecca in what she termed non-essentials.

"It may seem something like vanity, but

truth compels me to relate the fact, that I had not resided in the hospitable mansion of the good quaker more than six months, when I discovered that another motive mingled its power with the holy zeal of Rebecca. Sorrow had softened down my mind almost to her level; gratitude perhaps warmed my expressions and stimulated my attentions to her on every occasion. But I must be brief: within eighteen months after my deliverance from death, a marriage with Rebecca was proposed to me, in these terms, by her father:—

"Thou knowest, worthy friend," said he, "that Obadiah Mills is open and sincere in all his dealings, and thou wilt not therefore be greatly surprised at the abruptness of his overtures to thee on a very important occasion, connected most closely with his temporal felicity: thou knowest, too, the temper and the mind of my dear and only child Rebecca; thy penetration has not suffered thee to be blind to the preference

which the maiden entertaineth for thee above all others of our sex: what dost thou say, friend?—couldst thou receive this damsel of mine as thy companion—thy handmaid—thy wife?"

"I was in some measure prepared by his preface for this conclusion; and yet, Amelia, I call Heaven to witness, that the proposition came like the icy hand of death upon my heart. Wife!—oh, what painful ideas did that one word conjure up to torture and distract me! The quaker proceeded—

"I perceive, friend, that I have revived unpleasant thoughts within thee. Thou hast not, indeed, told us thy sorrowful tale; but one of thy sense and judgement must be aware that, during thy long sojourn under our roof, we have discovered that thy heart is the prey of dissppointment."

"Oh, sir, spare me—spare me," said I, "on this most painful subject!"

"The good man pressed my hand tenderly, and said—

" This once, this only once, I will not spare thee. I trust thou dost not account me wanting in those sensibilities which form the divine part of our nature; and therefore, if I open afresh thy wounds of sorrow, it is verily for the purpose of supplying to them consolation, if not cure. I will tell thee, with that candour which I would have thee imitate, that I have gathered from thy discourse that thou art an Englishman; that thou wast born to high expectations; and that thou hast been driven to poverty and despair. Thou hast said, that thou wouldst rather die than revisit thy native land; and thou hast suffered deep sighs, full of expression, to escape thy bosom, when our conversation has been of happy instances of love and wedlock. It is therefore plain that thy affections have been bestowed upon some maiden of thy native country. Is it not so?"

" I cannot resist such candour," said I: " yes, I have indeed bestowed my affections

on an object whom my heart selected from among all her sex, as the most deserving and most lovely—"

"Did she deceive thee, my poor friend?"

"Oh no, no; she is above all artifice; she is a model of earthly goodness! Let me in a word tell all my dreadful tale:—she thinks me numbered with the dead; she mourns, I know she mourns my death, and reveres my memory; but a strong, virtuous, holy sense of duty has induced her to bestow her hand upon another."

"She lives then!" said Mr. Mills.

"I bowed.

"And dost thou not desire to see her?"

"Oh, I would rather perish than for a moment ruffle the tranquillity which she now enjoys, supposing me no more, in the performance of her duties as a wife and a mother."

"That is a noble sentiment! But is that the sole cause of thy self-sacrifice? Forgive me the suspicion if I wrong thee, but I have

sometimes been tempted to listen to uncharitable suggestions :—what, I have thought, what but the dread of some crime's detection can be motive strong enough for such a voluntary exile from friends and country?"

"Oh, there you strike another painful chord! But I will not deceive you—it is the dread of a crime's detection that makes me rather be deemed a tenant of the grave—nay, would make me rather actually become so, than appear in that country, or to those friends! Yet am I not a criminal!"

"Thou speakest mysteriously; yet verily I believe thou art no criminal. It must then be to screen some other guilty—"

"Hold!—on this subject I must demand a strict adherence to our contract: if it suffice to repeat, most unequivocally, that I am not a criminal, well; but if you urge me further, I will rather fly, and, among Alpine snows, share the hardships and the fare of the rude mountaineer, than

abide beneath your hospitable roof another hour."

"I am satisfied, I am satisfied; but oh, my poor Rebecca!"

"Sir!" exclaimed I, while a sudden impression of the meaning of his pathetic exclamation made me tremble: "Sir!" repeated I, "Mr. Mills!—my revered preserver!—my benefactor!—my second father!—the giver of a new life!—speak!—what means that tear?"

"Ask thy own heart.—Wouldst thou not weep, if thou wert a father, to see thy only child pining in secret, cherishing a silent sorrow which thy parental anxiety had discovered in her looks, but which thou daredst not encourage her lips to disclose?"

"It would be rank hypocrisy to pretend ignorance of your meaning, sir; but surely you magnify the unmerited partiality of your amiable daughter for one who can never, never hope to render himself worthy of the honour

of her hand. Think, sir, what a wretch I am; though not a criminal, I am an outcast, without fortune, without friends, even without hopes—save only the hope of an early grave!"

"Thou knowest I am not given to many words on any occasion: on this subject, which is so near my heart, it is a pain to speak at all; yet a few words more are at this moment suggested to me, and I trust I am not prompted to utterance in vain. Let me call thy attention to our situation—to thine and mine, and the dear damsel's: if thou rejectest my proposal, mark what followeth:—thou wilt see a lovely flower, now fresh as the new-blown rose, whose fragrance is my food, and whose beauties are my delight—to rear which has been the occupation of my most happy hours, and to anticipate whose maturity has been the source of my most joyful hopes—this sweet flower wilt thou see, day by day, declining, drooping, dying!—and thou wilt see the man who

now addresses thee fall as this flower fades, and die as it decays: and then where wilt thou roam from the recollection of the old man and his flower?—Now let me reverse this picture; let me hope that kind Providence, in selecting us as the instruments of its mercy, to rescue thee from the crime of self-destruction—"

"Say no more, dear sir! say no more!" interrupted I: "the subject has impressed itself too deeply on my heart already: I am not a monster of ingratitude—"

"Dost thou give me then a hope?"

"If I thought that in me your Rebecca could—"

"I paused—I hesitated.

"Enough—enough!—I rejoice in the hope that dawns upon me," said the benevolent quaker: "I shall live to see my Rebecca happy! and our united efforts shall be exerted to revive thy drooping spirits and bind up thy mental wounds."

"Here our conversation ended. I felt

too keenly the nature of this sacrifice to gratitude to be able to reply.

" 'Twas strange—'twas wonderful—that, all mystery, and all poverty, as I must have appeared to the kind Rebecca, she should fix on such an one for the object of her tenderest affection. But this is a topic on which I dare not, ought not to dwell. Suffice it to say—that in the course of a few months we were married; and that shortly afterwards the good Mills, Rebecca and myself, quitted Switzerland to take possession of a very considerable estate in the Cape of Good Hope, which had devolved to us through a relation of my wife's mother, who was a native of Holland. On this plantation my son was born: I called him Alfred Hargrave, having myself assumed that surname. The birth of this child, produced upon my mind an effect beyond my powers to describe; but you, Amelia, are yourself a parent, and the description is unnecessary. If before the

birth of Alfred I had only recognised a sincere and tender friend in the fond Rebecca, I now felt that she was the mother of my son! Her father with rapture perceived the alteration in my mind, and Rebecca herself was the very picture of happiness and joy.

" Often, in gazing upon the offspring of this marriage as it received maternal nutriment in the presence of its smiling grandfather, I read a lesson to myself on the guilty rashness, on the madness (alas, what else is guilt!) which had so nearly hurled me into perdition. Oh, blind mortal, never let the whispering dæmon of despondency, nor the clamorous agent of despair deceive thy heart with their black forebodings! There is not, cannot be, in the affairs of men a lot too dark to be illumined by the future.

" The first cloud that checkered the serenity of our present situation was the death of the worthy Mills, by which I became

possessed, as Alfred Hargrave, of much more wealth than would have fallen to me in my own right as Alfred Beauchamp.

* * * * * * *

" Thus far, Amelia, I have described events and situations which are within the compass of your understanding, and to the truth of which your own feelings may bear testimony. But now a scene is to be painted so foreign to your experience, that, though it is still the drama of human nature, to you it must appear romance. Oh, may it ever seem so!

" I will not pain you by details; but in as brief an abstract as I can, I will unfold my tale.

" A villain named St. Alvin resided near us. He had conceived a deadly hate against D'Anville, a sprightly Frenchman, another neighbour, who visited us on terms of most familiar intercourse. St. Alvin, with talents worthy of a better cause, devoted himself to the accomplishment of his enémy's destruction; and the plan he adopted for that purpose was to

render him an object of my jealousy. Volumes would be occupied in the narration of all the artifices by which the villain wrought his damned web of foul suspicion round me, until I was so effectually entangled in his schemes, that there appeared to me no doubt of Rebecca's infidelity, of D'Anville's guilt, and of my own dishonour. Mad with the rage of jealousy, I devoted to destruction her, her offspring, and her supposed lover! Yes—I actually had planned the immolation of these three victims, when by an almost miraculous discovery of my murderous design they avoided death by flight. That very step, which was simply the effect of terror at a madman's fury, was artfully transformed by St. Alvin into a further proof of guilt; and I suffered the vessel on board of which they had taken refuge to sail for Holland, under a firm conviction that they had voluntarily eloped!

"From that hour I became an altered being. It seemed to me as if all sensibility had been deadened in my heart. I shed no tear; I

did not even sigh. The passions and affections of humanity became the subjects of my internal mockery. When tales of woe and misery reached my ears, I coldly smiled, and cried 'It is the common lot—the stamp and character of the human race!' When love or friendship was the theme, I laughed outright to think on what aerial bubbles deluded mortals, joyous, gazed, while at their feet the dens of disappointment and the pitfalls of calamity wide yawned! In short, I grew a misanthrope; I shunned society of every species; I courted solitude and gloom.

"From this state of mind I was aroused for a time by intelligence which I received through the Dutch newspapers, that the ship on board which the fugitives had sailed for Holland was driven, by a succession of storms, into the English Channel, where it foundered, and every creature perished! From the factors on the settlement I received confirmation of the loss; and, in spite of

Rebecca's guilt, which was plain as demonstration to my mind, I could not, stoic though I was, I could not repress some tears at her melancholy fate.

" Thus vanished the second social circle that had mocked my heart with visions of enjoyment.

" The first dream of happiness bantered me with phantoms in the forms of a brave and generous brother—a sage and worthy friend—and with—(epithets will but weaken that name)—with Amelia! That trance ended—that bubble burst; and yet, again I dreamed—again I hoped! The second group of figures were not indeed so vivid in their colours as the former; but they soothed and tranquillized, though they failed to exhilarate the heart:—a man of genuine benevolence appeared as a disinterested friend—a maiden of the most gentle and the kindest nature flattered me by an unwooed affection—the transports of a father were actually engendered in my breast by the re-

presentation of a beauteous infant, which was called my son!

" This vision had also passed away!—What, then, of reality remained to me? No friend, no brother, no wife, no child! I was myself alone! Why did I exist? This question led to a most useful inquiry: it brought to my recollection the immense wealth that was called mine, but which was, in fact, a useless heap from which I scarcely took a grain a day; while, in the world of misery on which I lived, there were thousands whose wretchedness small portions of this wealth might alleviate, if not remove.

" Ever enthusiastic in my feelings, I instantly resolved to convert all the property I possessed into money, which I lodged in the banks of Vienna, Paris, and London. I sold my estate and effects at the Cape, and, having made the necessary arrangements, set forth on a journey similar in its design to that of the immortal Howard.

" The first of these cities which I was

desirous of visiting was Paris; for there, I understood, resided the guilty Everard! Such was the alteration that the iron hand of misery had wrought upon my face and form, that had accident carried me into the presence of my brother he would not have recognised me.

"On my arrival in that sink of luxury, I learnt the removal of Everard and his wife, in company with a signor Belloni, to Basle in Switzerland, where my wretched brother had died suddenly. I followed them, partly from a strong impulse of curiosity to watch their proceedings, and partly from a wish to leave some tribute of gratitude with the good abbot and the brothers of St. Bernard. The last of these objects, however, was the first to be peformed, for the convent lies between Basle and the route I was then travelling.

"Perfectly disguised beyond all risk of being known, I rung at the gate of St. Bernard, which was opened to me by David Rivaux, the gardener, with whose clothes

I had decamped. I was conducted into the presence of the abbot, and found him in earnest conversation with a monk of very marked and peculiar physiognomy.

" Having stated that my business was to leave a sum of money in the hands of the abbot, as a token of gratitude from the friend of one who had formerly received important benefits from the hospitality of the convent, the abbot received me respectfully, and, turning to the monk, said—

" For a few minutes, brother, leave us; there may be some secret connected with the gift."

" None whatever," said I; " pray do not stir."

" Stay, then, Belloni," said the abbot.

" Belloni!" exclaimed I with an emotion of surprise; and then, recollecting my imprudence, I held down my head to conceal my confusion.

" Have I the honour to be known to you, sir?" said Belloni with a calmness of man-

ner that reassured me, as it demonstrated that he had no suspicion of me; though, at the mention of the name, I recognised in his remarkable features the companion of the marquis Melzi, at Florence, on the very evening of my intended assassination.

" I beg pardon; I must be mistaken; it is not possible," said I.

" Be you of what country you may," said the abbot, " it is probable you may know our brother, for he travels on our secular affairs, as well as for the church, into all parts of Europe."

" No: I was struck by a similarity of name; but it cannot be."

" If ever I have seen you till to-day," said Belloni, " the remembrance of the interview is entirely vanished."

" Here the subject changed to the business on which I came.

" Do you not remember, father," said I, " a poor maniac, who, after having been some time—"

" Holy Virgin!" exclaimed the abbot; " the maniac was the subject of our discourse when you entered!"

" Is he alive?" said Belloni with interested emotion.

" The poor maniac is no more!"

" The countenance of Belloni expressed the relief which this artifice of mine bestowed upon his guilty heart; and he exclaimed with consummate hypocrisy—

" Poor creature!"

" May we, with propriety, ask you," said the abbot, " if you know who the poor sufferer was, or from whence he came?"

" The countenance of Belloni again betrayed the utmost anxiety. I had now no doubt that he was one of the assassins, and it behoved me to use no common artifice to deceive him. I therefore replied to the abbot—that as I was travelling near the convent I encountered the maniac in a state of despondency; that I addressed him, and prevailed with him to accompany me home;

that he continued till his death to reside with me; and that he had often expressed a wish to reward the good abbot of St. Bernard; but of his story I was as ignorant at that moment as when I first accosted him.

"Belloni cast on me a glance that bespoke suspicion.

"It is unfortunate," said the abbot, "that poor brother Francis, who certainly knew something of this affair, should have become speechless at the very moment when he was about to unburthen his conscience."

"Psha!" said Belloni: "I repeat to you, father, that it must have been the effect of his disease upon his mind when he utterd such absurdities."

"May I ask what he did say?" said I.

"It is but two days ago," replied the abbot, "since brother Francis died. When he felt the pains of death upon him he sent for me, and begged to speak to me in private. I visited him: the convulsions of death had already seized him; but, in a

momentary interval of ease and sense, he grasped my hand and cried, 'Pray for the soul of a murderer!—my hands are stained with the blood of more than one human being!—but the poor maniac owes his life to me—I can say no more—Belloni is——' Heaven did not permit the dying wretch to conclude his sentence; and as Belloni here avers a total ignorance of his meaning, it must for ever remain a mystery."

"It was with the utmost difficulty I overcame the impulse of revenge, which strongly urged me to destroy, upon the spot, the villain whose guilt was thus clearly proved; but the timely recollection of its consequences saved the monster from the death-blow he merited. I took my leave, and hurried from the convent.

"It seemed as if Providence had ordained that a discovery of the whole horrible transaction should be revealed to me. In the progress of my journey towards Basle I one night arrived late at a lone inn, and

having taken some refreshment retired to my chamber. I was presently surprised to hear the sound of voices in an adjoining room, so distinctly that I could understand almost every word. The conversation was held in Italian; and I was soon convinced, to my unspeakable astonishment, that they were the voices of the monk Belloni and the wife of Everard. You will easily imagine with what interest I listened to the following dialogue:—

"You amaze me, Belloni, not by this marvellous tale of father Francis, but by your childish credulity in believing it:—ha, ha, ha!"

"Nay, I can laugh as well as you, signora, but I cannot shut my eyes against conviction. You will not deny that this letter is the hand-writing of the cowardly recreant Francis. He entrusted it to Mandoni the very morning of his death; and, had not our good angel stopped his breath as he did, no doubt he would have piously

confessed as much to that old fool the abbot."

"This is Francis's writing beyond all question," said the signora.

"And our cypher was, you recollect," to use every seventh letter: now then I'll read it to you once more:—

"'Belloni, I am at the end of life's journey, and out of your power. I am tortured by conscience, but, if I can, I will die without betraying you; though I have had confession more than once in my heart. If I expire without disclosing my sins to the old abbot, rest assured none other shall know them; but, should I have resolution sufficient for this purpose, there is one sin of mercy which you must know, though you will never forgive. The elder of the Beauchamps is alive! In the affair of the wood I deceived you! While you and Melzi were dispatching the other Englishman, Everard Beauchamp felled his brother to the ground, and left him for dead. When, according

to our plan, I returned to strip the two bodies, and place them in a situation to be found by the officers, to my horror and surprise, the body of sir Alfred was not there: Montagu and one of the banditti, whom he had slain defending himself, were the only dead to be found. I knew whom I had to deal with: I had no doubt of the death of sir Alfred; but imagined that some of the banditti, ignorant of our plan, had buried him. In this dilemma I had recourse to fraud, and mangled the remains of the slain ruffian in such a manner that no lineament or feature could be recognised; and they were interred with Montagu's as those of sir Alfred Beauchamp. I passed some time in terror, lest by any fatality the wounds of sir Alfred should not have been mortal, and that he had escaped; but my doubts were shortly terminated. Searching strictly in the wood, I was at length terrified into certainty by the most horrid spectacle imaginable—the living sir Alfred!—living, but deprived

of reason! He was sitting beneath a tree, chewing the bark, which he tore off with his teeth; his hair was clotted with congealed blood; his eyes were sunk into their sockets; his lips were parched; his face was pale as death, where it was not stained by dried blood. It would then doubtless have been mercy, as well as policy, to have plunged a dagger in his heart; but, had my own life depended on the blow, I could not have inflicted it. Strange unaccountable mercy!—the arm that would have stabbed him without remorse, in vigour and in happiness, now trembled to release him from such a horrid state of being! He saw me, and crawled upon his hands and knees towards me: I spoke, and found him to be totally deprived of reason. I took a sudden resolution:—I stripped off several of his garments, which I threw into a fosse. I then carried him to our secret cavern, where I concealed him till an opportunity occurred of conveying him with me on my return to Switzerland. I lodged

him under the care of Anselm. From the custody of this keeper he broke away; and, one stormy night, after having wandered a considerable time among the mountains, he came, as if directed by fate, to the very gates of St. Bernard.

" ' You knew that a maniac was sheltered by the abbot, but you never dreamt that sir Alfred Beauchamp slept under the same roof with ourselves. You knew also, that the maniac recovered in a great degree the exercise of his reason, and that clandestinely he quitted the convent of St. Bernard; but till this moment you knew not that sir Alfred Beauchamp was that same maniac, living, and at large!

" ' Belloni, farewell!—This is the last proof of attachment you will ever receive from a wretch who for so many years has devoted himself to crime—to Melzi—and Belloni!' "

" Well," said the monk, having concluded this letter, " do you still persist in your unbelief?"

"No: I have deliberated upon the incidents of the tale, and its connexion and agreement with known facts, and, taking into consideration every possible motive of Francis to deceive, I am convinced the story is a marvellous true story. But what then!—Alfred is dead at last, and, as you were told, died without disclosing his real story."

"Yes," replied Belloni, "if we may rely upon this stranger's report.

"And why should we not? Besides, is it to be imagined for a moment that a period of more than three years would have been suffered to elapse, since his retreat from the convent, without a claim on his part?—No, no. Let's hear no more of this business; matters of higher interest demand the present hour. Thanks to my energy, I trusted to no second agent for our deliverance from Everard, and had Alfred's death been trusted to my skill in drugs, instead of your banditti scheme, even these shadowy

doubts that now flit before us would never have appeared. But now to the cause of our present interview.—The substance of my last dispatch from England is, that there must be an heir to the Beauchamp estates, or they will lapse into possession of the crown. M'Farlane writes me they are much more valuable than they were at first thought to be, and that the possession of them will well reward the trouble of securing a right in them. We must therefore take instant measures to procure a male infant, and present him to the English nation as a little sir Everard Beauchamp."

"That 's a deed not so easily executed as planned," said Belloni.

"Nothing more easy," replied this heroine of iniquity: "at the foot of the mountain, and near the house where I have resided during this last month, there is a very neat cottage which you must have noticed. It is inhabited by an old Swiss lady and a very beautiful young Englishwoman: the

latter has a healthy babe, a boy about six months old; he shall be sir Everard. I have learnt that the brat is the fruit of a clandestine marriage, and, of course, to remove it out of the way of parents who are compelled to conceal it, will be rendering them a service. Don't you understand me?"

"I perceive your design; but how it is to be carried into execution I don't so clearly see. The death of Francis—the absence of M'Farlane in England, and—"

"Away with these imaginary difficulties! Surely the chieftain droops!—Take more wine, man: your eyes are heavy. What occasions this lethargic dulness?—you are not the Belloni of yesterday—"

"I can not wear away the impression which the visit of this stranger to the convent—"

"Mere visions, man!—no more of that, I pray. Are you prepared to set out on Thursday for Vienna?"

" I am."

" On the twenty-ninth of next month I will join you there *with Everard's son and heir!* I do not ask—I do not need your aid. Nay, you may stare your doubts; but have I not said it?—and when did ever the pupil of Belloni deceive her master?"

" Never, by my soul!—nor will I doubt her now. Come, pledge me, my beauteous heroine! A bumper, Catharina; aye, a bumper!"

" Now are you yourself:—the same Belloni who found me in the camp, a stripling heroine: who first warmed my heart with love and glory, and taught my soul to rise above the artificial creatures of society, who herd together with a yoke of law and conscience round their necks, and call their trammels order and morality!"

" Never shall I forget count Rosni's beauteous page!" said Belloni.

" Never shall I forget the hour of freedom which I owe to thee, Belloni!—when thy

bright poniard stain'd itself with that old lecher's blood; and from the station of a menial serving-boy raised me to the empire of a woman, and blest me with that triumph o'er thy manly heart which forms the lustre of my life! Yes, I will bless the memory of old Rosni, for his undesigned favours: had he not decoyed me from the lowly hovel of my mother, I might now have been a village drudge; or tramped about the world with some itinerant musician!"

"At this point of their conversation, Amelia, I break off; all that followed is unfit to be related to the ear of chastity! From what I have detailed you will be enabled to judge how little inclined I was to sleep. Determined to quit the inn before these monsters in human form awoke, I saw the moon descend below the mountains, and watched their eastern summits until the rising of the sun.

"My first object was if possible to discover the English lady at the cottage, and

to warn her against the dreadful design of the barbarian, who had resolved to steal from her a treasure whose value none but a parent can appreciate. My clue to discovery, however, was insufficient, and my efforts during two successive days were ineffectual.

" On the third day, borne down by fatigue and anxiety, I was attacked by symptoms of fever; I was a stranger at an inn; I felt a strong presentiment of approaching death; I desired the attendance of a protestant French clergyman, whose character was an honour to his profession; I told him my fears, and, requesting him to be my banker for the present, intrusted to him a hastily written will, by which I disclosed some brief particulars of my story, pointed out the depositories of my property, and bequeathed the whole to the disposal of her, who *was* Amelia Darlington.

" These dispositions were scarcely made, when the progress of disease again deprived

me of the use of reason. For many weeks it was doubtful if I should live or die; and several months elapsed ere I was in a fit state to travel. To the tender charities of the benevolent Mercier, the minister, I attribute my restoration; to whose hospitable mansion I removed, and where I remained until I was sufficiently restored to resume my journey.

" I could collect no intelligence of the loss of any child in the neighbourhood; nor could I discover any traces of the route of lady Beauchamp, or signora Belloni, by both which names I endeavoured to discover her.

" I took the route to Vienna, where my inquiries were equally fruitless. I then revisited Paris, and there I heard of lady Beauchamp, who, I found, resided in the environs of that city, with her uncle signor Belloni, and her son Everard, a child, I was informed, about three years old.

" I learned that lady Beauchamp was vi-

sited by several of the English nobility resident at Paris; that she was esteemed a lady of great accomplishments; and that her uncle, the signor, was courted by all the sçavans of France.

" I was desirous of seeing the pretended Everard; and for this purpose, as much disguised as possible, I frequented the public walks.

" One day, in the gardens of the Thuilleries, I caught a glimpse of lady Beauchamp, with an infant running at her side, of a pale unhealthy complexion. Can this be the child of the beautiful Englishwoman? said I to myself, while I could not help gazing upon the boy with more expression than an indifferent observer. At that moment a tap on my shoulder occasioned me to turn round, and Belloni grinned in my face.

" You are known at Paris," said he: " if you will take my advice, you will quit it before day-break to-morrow."

" Without waiting for a reply he disappeared.

" This incident took place at that period when the French revolution was in embryo, and the court of France was in a state of the utmost perplexity, listening to every rumour of danger, and easily instigated to any measure of precaution.

" That night my person and my papers were seized by the officers of the court; and, as I persisted in a sullen silence, and as my papers were written in cyphers, there certainly was more ground for suspicion of me than existed against many other victims, who, like me, were sacrificed to the times. Gold saved me from the dungeons of the Bastile; but the life of the corrupt officer, who connived at my escape, depended upon my instant disappearance from Paris.

" I set out for Spain, and arrived safely at Madrid, where I formed a most pleasing acquaintance with several intelligent Spaniards, and with one in particular, named

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Antonio de la Torre, whose constant melancholy attracted my sympathy. He was the son of a nobleman, who was unfortunately a great bigot and a proud tyrant: Antonio was the reverse of such a character. His father had persecuted him with entreaties and commands to marry the daughter of a grandee; but, from the confidence with which he honoured me, I learned that Antonio was already married; that his wife was an Englishwoman; and that he had a son.

"Where are they?" exclaimed I with with some eagerness,

"The question pained him; he shed tears; and in the sequel informed me that he had provided them an asylum in Switzerland, till the death of his father should enable him to acknowledge them.

"But oh, my good Hargrave!" continued he, "judge what are the feelings of your friend, when he tells you that they have quitted, unknown to him, that asylum,

and that more than two years and a half have elapsed since I have heard from my dear Eliza, who till this long silence never omitted a post."

"Wonderful Providence!" exclaimed I, and was about to relate my suspicions of the fate of his wife and child, when, at the very moment, the enraged father of my friend burst open the door of my apartment, where we were sitting, and, surrounded by alguazils, tore away his son to one prison, while I was conveyed to another.

"I was now in a still worse situation than I should have been in at Paris. I was now in the power of the ecclesiastical court of Spain. The charge against me was the most heavy that could fall upon me—that of corrupting to heresy the son of a noble Spaniard.

"I will pass over the years of my imprisonment in silence:— hy should I pain a heart that I know overflows with humanity, by detailing the barbarities of the Spanish

inquisition? Suffice it, Amelia, to say, that, for a period of nearly seven years, Alfred Beauchamp was enabled, by Omnipotent Mercy, to endure tortures and imprisonment with the fortitude of a Christian; and that, at the expiration of that term, was almost miraculously delivered from the fangs of monsters, who blasphemously declare themselves the agents and ministers of God!

"I was one night aroused from slumber, and, being first blindfolded and handcuffed, was put into a carriage. I expected death; and, need I say, I welcomed it, Amelia! I travelled during many hours: at length the vehicle stopped. I was taken out, the manacles were loosened from my hands, and a letter was put into them.

"Obstinate heretic!" said my guide, "after a space of time in which you can count a thousand, you may remove the bandage from your eyes."

"The carriage drove off. I obeyed the

injunction; and, to my astonishment, saw, for it was broad day, that I was alone on an open plain, with a city or town in view before me.

" The letter ran thus :—' You are free; the town before you is ——; leave Spain instantly. The inclosed bill will bear your expenses to Cadiz, and the accompanying passport will insure you an unmolested passage to England; the only place of safety for heretics, and whither you must go direct, or the humanity which delivers you from death will be repaid by the martyrdom of your deliverer.'

" From Cadiz I embarked on board an English vessel, bound to Hull, where I furnished myself with necessaries, and then, without any settled design, travelled to Scarborough. With what indescribable feelings of mingled regret and gratitude did I breathe once more the air of my native England, after a series of such unparalleled miseries, such successive scenes of horror.

" I remained at Scarborough several weeks, during which period my health, that had suffered greatly by long confinement and cruel tortures, was considerably amended.

" I wrote from that place to my agent in town, who only knew me as Mr. Hargrave, and his answers afforded me the fullest satisfaction of his integrity and honour. He expressed the great surprise he had experienced at my long silence; and, as the last place from which I had written to him was Paris, he had concluded that I must have fallen a victim to the sanguinary spirit of the revolution. That part of my property which I had vested in the English funds, under trust to him, he had so well husbanded that, with what I possessed in the bank of Vienna, it appeared that I was still in possession of twelve thousand a year, though the devastations of anarchy had annihilated a large sum lodged in the funds of France.

" What was I to do with such an income! Abroad I had adopted Howard's plan of

visiting hospitals and prisons, and in England I resolved to pursue the same research after misery. I do not tell this to Amelia as a matter of boast, for I doubt if the root of the resolution was virtue; but I relate it as a trait of my mind. Splendour I abhorred; society I shunned; conversation I trembled to indulge in. When I saw happiness in families I could not believe it to be real; I, perhaps, wished that it were not so. I conjured up some murderous brother, or adulterous wife and perfidious friend in embryo, and inwardly prophesied the dissolution of the baseless vision of domestic bliss! But scenes of woe, and pictures of human misery I hailed with responsive feelings, and recognised as the realities of existence!

"In this frame of mind I resolved to take up my residence in some obscure cottager's family, near the princely abode of my ancestors, from which I might make my secret excursions at pleasure. It was then my in-

tention to remain wholly unknown as long as I lived; but I took measures that, after my death, I might be laid in the tomb of my forefathers.

" You will perhaps think me incongruous in choosing to nurse painful recollections, by fixing my residence within sight of the monuments of my happier days; but I will candidly declare to you, Amelia, that of all the pangs which my heart had endured, and of which I most dreaded memory's reiteration, was the infidelity of Rebecca.

" In comparison with the fire in my heart and brain which Rebecca's image kindled, Everard's guilt, and thy innocent infidelity, were objects of tranquil contemplation; and I own that I sought to bury the remembrance of the former by renewed recollections of the latter. But it seemed as if Fate had decreed that there should be no termination to my miseries—no antidote to my despair!

" Even this melancholy, this horrible

solace was denied me by the Fate that had pursued me with such cruel perseverance. Could it have suggested itself to the most inventive of malicious fiends, that, in the very spot I had selected for the burial place of all recollection of Rebecca, I should be doomed to encounter the very image of the adultress herself—the offspring of her crime, and the living monument of my own dishonour! Yes, Amelia, the tormenting ministers of Fate had converted the pure benevolence of thy bosom into the means of misery to me:—for in the very precincts of Beauchamp Abbey, on the site of Darlington Hall, I actually encountered the son of Rebecca!

* * * * * * * * *

"But here let me drop my pen:—here, on my knees, let me confess how much I have blasphemed:—with contrite confusion, let me look back on the sentiments I have just written, as at that moment they were felt. For while I was cursing, in bitterness

of heart, the ideal being Fate, a Power superior to Fate ought to have been adored for his wonderful mercies!

"That child, Amelia, that child whom I spurned from me, in the manner Mrs. Enfield described to you—yes, that very orphan whom your generous bounty reared *is—is my own child!*

"In that impious hour, when I cursed the innocent, the injured mother, who gave him to me, I ran, wild with rage, I knew not whither. For days and weeks I hurried from town to town, not knowing where to rest! At length I approached the capital; and, recollecting that in the centre of the multitude of London I should be more concealed, and less noticed than in a village of ten families, I took an obscure lodging, which from time to time I changed, to avoid discovery.

"When my mind was in some degree once more restored to tranquillity, I determined to pay a visit, in person, to my honest agent Mr.

Potts, who had for many years acted as the solicitor and London steward of the Beauchamps. That information, which the discovery of Rebecca's child prevented me from acquiring in the neighbourhood of the Abbey, and which I had not since learned, I knew I might collect from him.

" As Mr. Hargrave, the old gentleman received me with the utmost candour and politeness, and in the course of our conversation, I purposely introduced the mention of sir Everard Beauchamp.

" He sighed; and, shaking his head significantly, exclaimed, ' Ah poor Beauchamp Abbey !'

" It is still standing I suppose," said I.

" Yes; the old walls are standing, and the old pictures and furniture remain, but every acre that could be sold of the estate is gone into other hands. But pray Mr. Hargrave are you a Cumberland man ?"

" I lived near the village of Darlington till the time I went abroad," said I.

"You must have heard, then, of the favourite and hope of that part of the country, Sir Alfred? though he must have been considerably younger than you, sir.

"No, Mr. Potts, we are nearly of an age. The influence of an eastern climate, and the hardships of a Spanish prison have given me an appearance of greater age than in reality belongs to me. I remember Alfred Beauchamp well; we both quitted England at the same time.

"Would to God," exclaimed the worthy Potts, "would to God, Alfred Beauchamp had never quitted England!"

"He died, I understand, at Florence."

"He was *murdered*, sir, at Florence."

"Indeed! and who succeeded to the title and estates?"

"A brother:—his only brother, but no more like to him— But we must not talk of these matters now, sir. However, he soon himself followed the murdered Alfred to the grave. God forgive me if I am uncha-

ritable, but there I think their journey was divided."

"And who holds the estate at present?"

"It is now, sir, little more than a name. Everard left a widow, an Italian, who was pregnant of a son, or, which is the same thing, who says she was pregnant, at his death; and this boy, a minor, is now sir Everard Beauchamp. He and his mother are at this moment in Paris with an uncle of hers who came over to England on the death of Everard, and, procuring proper powers, disposed of every thing disposable, and then returned to the continent."

"The old family mansion, I suppose, then, is totally deserted?"

"It would have been, but for the enthusiastic attachment of an old domestic, Adam Osborn."

"Adam Osborn! Good Heavens!—is that worthy honest soul still living? It would be a cordial to my heart to see the venerable, good old man!"

"What—you remember old Adam, too?

Yes, the old boy is alive still; and though his heart is half broken at the desolation of a family that was his glory, his faculties are still sound, as you may see by this letter, only received by yesterday's post."

"With an eagerness that would have betrayed me to the least jealous eye, I snatched the letter and read it. The conclusion of it ran thus:

"And so here, worthy sir, I as it were strive to support the dignity of the name of Beauchamp, without a penny of their money. God forgive me!—it is all their money, gotten all at least in their service; aye, and honestly gotten; but, what I mean is, without a penny of these *Italian* Beauchamps. Well, well, I would rather spend it so than in any other way. So, good sir, never let it be understood but what our letter establishment is kept up at the family expense. I do not let even Mrs. Newton know that her board and wages, as well as that of two wenches, a gardener, and one or two more all comes out of old Adam Osborn's stock;

and thank God, that put it into my head to save the little I did ; for if I had not, Beauchamp Abbey gate would have been shut years back, and our new-fangled lord, the waiter's son, would have crowed over it as he does now over the fields and the cottages that once belonged to it. God be thanked, that the unnatural creature of an Italian (I always hated these foreign folks,) could not sell the Abbey nor the pictures ; but I am sorry your opinion is, that the young baronet himself can do so when he comes of age ; but I think it is impossible that any foreign part of him can corrupt the Beauchamp part so much as that comes to—and so I will still go on hoping for the best. If please God spare my life to see that day, I shall have the happiness to say, that my little stock kept Beauchamp Abbey up till Sir Everard was of years of discretion ; and if he have a grain of his forefather's spirit in him, he will say, 'Old Adam, there's your money again ;' but it will rest with me if I like to take it.

I could have wished it had been a son of my dear, dear Alfred's, instead of his graceless brother's; but God knows best what's to be done, and so I conclude,

Worthy sir,

Your servant ever to command,

ADAM OSBORN.

"P. S. The pictures are as fresh as when my dear lady died, and we keep fires in all the rooms by turns, so that no damp has come to the tapestry, but I am grieved to say, the park and grounds are sadly out of sorts."

"Comments on such a letter as this are not wanted to illustrate to you, Amelia, the impression it made on the heart of Alfred. That I did not betray myself by my emotions is attributable solely to the absence of all suspicion on the part of the honest solicitor."

"It will be ten thousand pities," said I, after a pause, "if the future conduct of the

young baronet disappoint such honourable feelings."

"My only hope for old Adam is, that he will die before the day of trial," said Mr. Potts.

"In the sequel of our conversation, I further learnt from Mr. Potts, that he was convinced there was not the least intention on the part of the Italians, even to settle in England; but that as soon as the law permitted him to do so, the minor would be induced by his mother to sell all title to the Abbey and its dependencies.

"I mention these circumstances, Amelia, as they formed the base of an important resolution. I, from the moment of that interview, resolved to wait the issue of the Italian's determination. 'Only a few more years,' said I, 'and the mansion of my forefathers may become mine again by purchase, without a revelation of my story. As Hargrave I may inhabit it; and if it should please Providence that the husband of

Amelia should retire from the scenes of life before I die, in that case I may be induced to proclaim my resurrection from imagined death, and we may yet close our days together on that spot which was the witness of our early vows. Romantic as it may appear, such was actually the hope on which I fed for the period of ten years. I continued to live principally in London, but made occasional visits into Cumberland; for the effect of this hope upon my mind was wonderful. I now took an interest in what passed around the Abbey; I calculated on improvements; I panted to make myself known to the faithful creature, old Adam, and anxiously watched his health from year to year. My short visits to the neighbourhood of the Abbey, were always made by stealth from a woodman's cottage in a wood about ten miles distant, under the name of Thompson.

"In these visits to the Abbey, I once or twice saw at a distance the child of crime, as I then denominated the orphan of

your bounty. Time had blunted the poignancy of my first resentment against his mother. I often questioned the propriety of my deserting her child, thrown as it were by miracle in my way. I compared my conduct with that of many of your sex, Amelia, who with a noble magnanimity have not only pardoned infidelity in their husbands, but even reared the innocent offspring of their criminal amours! Why, thought I, should there be a difference?—or if the customs of society have fixed a greater stigma on the adultress than on the adulterer, why should the distinction extend to the innocent child? These thoughts led me to inquiries concerning the son of Rebecca, and I discovered that he made a progress in learning and accomplishments scarcely less miraculous than his preservation and discovery. I made some conclusions in his favour; but I resolved not to discover my intentions until your return from abroad, which I learnt was

fixed for the very same period as the arrival of the pretended sir Everard Beauchamp and the Italians.

" Oh, how important appeared to me the approach of that autumn! At length it arrived.

" It was the month of September, when, as I was one evening returning from the house of Mr. Potts whom I occasionally consulted in the character of Hargrave, a ragged wretch, lean and cadaverous, accosted me at the corner of Chancery-lane, and craved my charity. It was dark and it rained heavily.

" Poor creature, you seem wretched," said I.

" Oh, indeed I am," exclaimed the man; " bread has not passed my lips this whole day; and I have a wife and child at home now starving."

" Here, friend," said I, " take this," and slipped some money into his hand.

"He seemed overwhelmed, and could scarcely articulate his thanks.

"Is this hypocrisy, or is it extreme misery?" thought I. I determined to follow and watch him. The shivering wretch turned up a narrow court in Holborn, and stopping at a miserable tenement he pulled a string and the door opened. I then spoke to him.—

"Are your wife and child in this house?"

"Yes."

"Show me to them."

"We ascended three pair of stairs; and in a naked garret, on the floor, was stretched his wife with a little infant at her breast.

"Never did I behold a scene of such penury. But the scene that followed, Amelia, how shall I describe it! The man, stirring with a bit of wood the almost extinguished embers of fire that burnt in a chimney without any stove, stooped down, and with his breath blew up a flame and lighted a candle. While he was thus em-

ployed, I had taken off my hat, and when he turned round with the light in his hand, he started, shrieked, and fell senseless on the floor.

"It was the villain St. Alvin!—he, who implanted in my breast that fatal groundless jealousy which led to the destruction of Rebecca and D'Anville. A confession followed; which, while it painted the miserable wretch before me as the most consummate of malignant hypocrites, displayed most clearly the innocence of my injured wife; and gave me in the child of your bounty, Amelia, a SON!

"On this part of my story I will not dwell. No words can describe my feelings; your own heart must supply the chasm. Resentment against a being whom Providence by a series of calamities had reduced to the lowest depths of human misery, I could not cherish; and pity for an object of such extreme wretchedness mingled itself with the horror and disgust I felt for his

depravity. "God grant that your contrition be lasting and sincere!" exclaimed I, throwing my purse to his squalid wife; "but never, never let me see your face more, lest the recollection of the vast injuries you have heaped upon me cause me to forget that I profess myself a christian!"

"I hurried from the abode of misery. "Injured, murdered Rebecca!" said I: "and thou, benevolent spirit, that once inhabited her father's form! and thou too, calumniated D'Anville, do ye now look down in pity or in anger on the victim of this inhuman monster? Ye are removed far above the want of any earthly reparation, save that which justice shall accord to your memories! But in thy rescued son, my sainted wife, thou shalt receive the triple tribute of my heart's penitence, gratitude, and love."

"Fired with this sentiment, instead of repairing to my obscure lodging, I returned to my solicitor's. I found there the most elo-

quent counsellor in the kingdom. The opportunity was tempting, my feelings were warm, and, acting as it were from an uncontrolable inspiration, I at once resolved to throw myself upon their candour, honour, and secrecy. I revealed to them the whole of my eventful story; and have from that moment continued to act under their direction.

"The arrival of the Italians and the pretended sir Everard was hourly expected; and it was deemed prudent, that for some weeks I should continue in disguise and in retirement, to prevent a premature discovery before the necessary testimonies could be procured.

"Anxious now to behold again that son, whom ten years before I had spurned from my knees with sentiments of horror, I determined instantly to repair to Cumberland.

"As I was standing at the window of the hotel, while a chaise was preparing, a post-coach and four drove into the court-yard.

Conceive what were my emotions when I saw alight from this coach, Belloni and his confederate lady Beauchamp, accompanied by their pretended son, and a ruffian who acted as a sort of keeper under the designation of valet! They were met at the door by a supercilious coxcomb, whom I have since known as captain Neville, who, supposing them to be what they appeared, acted as their *chaperon* into London. He ushered them into a room adjoining that in which I was waiting; there was only a temporary partition between us, and I caught several sentences of their conversation. "Your ladyship will not have occasion to wait a quarter of an hour," said this captain, "I am quite transported to think how successful I have been. One of the most stylish houses in town, furnished in Oakley's best taste, and ready to receive your ladyship the moment you step from my chariot, which will be here in a second!"

"We are under infinite obligations to you," said the monk.

"Trifles, trifles, my dear signor! It affords me the highest possible satisfaction to be of the slightest service. Nothing could be more fortunate than that the duchess of Belgrave should have sailed with us. Her name is so omnipotent, that if she will but bring you out, all London will be at your feet. Those Rosevilles are certainly queer, stiff, reserved sort of people; but if you can prevail on the young baronet here to indulge the earl with his whim, and let him have the old Abbey, my word for it you make him your very humble servant also! What say you, sir Everard?"

"These are my oracles, good sir," said the youth in a pensive tone; "they *know* I shall not question their decrees."

"The servants of the hotel now entered the room with trunks and portmanteaus, and I heard no more. They departed from the

hotel almost immediately. This incident was followed by another no less extraordinary. My chaise had been announced; but I waited to write a note to Mr. Potts, to acquaint him with the substance of what I had overheard. I was delivering the letter into the hands of a waiter, when a chaise with four foaming horses drove up, and a foreigner put his head impatiently out of the carriage, demanding in bad English, if a coach and four had arrived within the hour?

"Gazing intently upon this stranger's face, I thought I had seen it before; and judging from his accent that he was a Spaniard, I answered him in that language, that "the lady Beauchamp and her son sir Everard had just arrived in a——"

"He interrupted me with an exclamation of joyful surprise, and in Spanish said, "Can it be possible? Do I see the good Englishman Hargrave, and does he not remember Leon d'Almeida, the friend of Antonio

della Torre?" He flew into my arms; mutual explanations ensued; and I learnt that his long and indefatigable labours of friendship had at length been rewarded by the discovery of the son of don Antonio in the person of sir Everard Beauchamp! He informed me, that don Antonio, upon the death of his father, was liberated from prison, and, accompanied by himself, instantly proceeded to the retreat in Switzerland, where he had lodged his wife and child. The house was uninhabited, the garden a wild waste—and the sad tidings which he gathered in the neighbourhood, confirmed the fears which such a sight occasioned.

"This was the melancholy story they were told:—The wife of Antonio was accustomed to take frequent solitary walks among the mountains: one day, when she had been absent on her usual stroll about half an hour, a lady came to the cottage, and, pretending great fatigue, begged leave to rest herself in the small parlour, where the

old Swiss nurse was rocking a sleeping infant in a cradle. The strange lady asked the hospitable dame for a cup of wine, drank a part, and then pressed the remainder on her hostess, who unsuspiciously pledged her wicked guest. It is not doubted, but that some potent infusion was dexterously dropped into the cup, as in a few minutes the old woman fell into a state of senseless lethargy; in which the lady of don Antonio, on her return, discovered her alone in the parlour, sitting near the cradle, which was robbed of its little tenant. The shrieks and cries of its maddened mother, which brought her two domestics from their work in a garden at some distance from the cottage, did not arouse the sleeping nurse. More than an hour elapsed before her eyes opened, and a much longer period before her senses were sufficiently recovered to know and to relate the horrid tale.

"The distracted parent only recovered from one violent hysteric fit to relapse into

another, until her delicate frame sunk beneath the anguish of her mind; and in less than four-and-twenty hours her miseries and her life were ended!

"The old Swiss nurse had never been intrusted by her ill-fated mistress with the name or quality of her husband; she only knew that her letters and remittances were brought from Basle: it was necessary therefore to examine her papers, and several letters were found, with a considerable sum of money; but most of the letters had been written without signature or address, and even from those which had once been signed the name was torn away.

"Thus, no clue to a discovery of her friends being obtained, all further research was relinquished.

"The two servants in less than a week after their mistress's burial suddenly disappeared, having previously combined to rob the cottage; and in a few days the old nurse died.

"The simple inhabitants of the neigh-

bourhood were convinced from these circumstances, that the lady who had appeared to the nurse and taken the infant away, was a Water-Sprite; and the story of the "Lady of the Lake" prevented the cottage from ever receiving another tenant.

"At this part of his narration I interrupted don Almeida, by saying, "On my life I know who was the lady of the lake!"

"It was the woman I pursue," said Almeida, "it was lady Beauchamp, who having no heir, stole him now called sir Everard in that horrible manner."

"Miraculous!" exclaimed I. "'Twas she indeed! But tell me by what magic you have discovered this transaction."

"In few words thus:—The first design of don Antonio was to have removed the remains of his unfortunate wife from Switzerland to Spain: but from this I dissuaded him; and he was at length contented with erecting over her grave a monument de-

scribing her as his wife, and relating the mysterious loss of their infant son. The inscription was repeated in the Latin, English, French, and Spanish languages on the four sides of the tomb. The address of the disconsolate husband and father was subscribed, in the remote hope that it was possible that some person might peruse the tale, to whom circumstances might be known that would serve to elucidate the mysterious fate of the infant Anthonio.

"Nothing, however, resulted from this measure until about twelve months ago, when a letter from the baron von K—— reached don Antonio della Torre at Madrid. It stated that the writer, though perfectly a stranger, sympathized with the feelings of a husband and a father; that having travelled the preceding summer from Vienna to Switzerland, he had been much affected at the tomb of donna della Torre; that he had taken a drawing of the monument and a copy of the inscrip-

tion, and had introduced them into a brief account of his tour, which on his return to Vienna was published. The baron then proceeded to relate, that a short time after the appearance of his book he received an anonymous letter, the words of which, as nearly as I can recollect, are these :—

" A father of the church having perused the interesting Tour of the baron von K——, was struck particularly with his story of the Lady of the Lake, and account of the monument to the memory of the unfortunate mother of the stolen child. The anecdote brought to his mind the confession of a wretched sister, to whose death-bed he was called ten or twelve years ago, who declared to him in her last moments, that the sin which lay heaviest on her soul, was the having perjured herself by attesting the birth of a male child, which she had every reason to believe was stolen, as she was bribed to the perjury. She stated that the infant was brought to her here in Vienna by a lady

who was the widow of an English baronet, for whose son and heir this child was reared; that she attended the lady as the nurse of this child for six or seven years; that she travelled with her from this city to Paris, and other places; and that when the boy was seven years old it was placed under the care of some persons at Paris, and she then wished to return here to Vienna: but fear of her betraying the secret caused her employer to detain her contrary to her will, until at length she contrived to escape by flight from a dreadful state of imprisonment! When she was conjured by the confessor to declare the name by which this lady was called, she obstinately refused, alleging that she had sworn never to disclose it. In vain he argued, promised, threatened. The horror she felt at having taken a false oath, though extreme, was not greater than the terror which seized her at the very idea of breaking even an involuntary one. He repeated his arguments; promised absolu-

tion unequivocally if she would reveal the name. By this time life ebbed apace, the little she had uttered had been spoken with difficulty in broken sentences, and when by her countenance she appeared willing to pronounce the name, her speech totally failed her. She was however still sensible, and, making a feeble effort to raise her head, delivered to me a very small miniature portrait of a gentleman, with an emotion in her face which demonstrated that the picture has some connexion with the child: but death followed instantly this exertion, and her meaning must remain unknown."

"The miniature has remained in the possession of the confessor from that moment until the present, when, by the bearer, he consigns it to the care of the baron von K——, whose sensibility and discretion will, no doubt, direct him to make the proper use of this communication from one of his many admirers; while his extensive connexions and correspondence with princes

and men of letters, in all the capitals of Europe, afford him such extraordinary means of carrying into effect any benevolent views which this information may suggest."

"The baron's letter concluded with a reference to a banker at Madrid, who would deliver the miniature to the receipt of don Antonio. Not a moment elapsed in thought or consultation:—the impatient father flew after this first glimpse of a long-lost child; and no sooner possessed the relic, so miraculously recovered, than he recognised it to be his own portrait, which he had given to his wife, and which, in all probability, hung round the neck of the infant when it was so inhumanly carried away.

"From that day to this, Hargrave," continued don Almeida, "we have pursued the slender clue. The unfortunate wife of my friend was the orphan of an English merchant, whose friends placed her, when very young, as a boarder in a convent at Brussels, from which he married her. Our first application was to her guardian, who is still

living in this metropolis. He furnished us with a list of the English baronets, pointing out such as had died within the last one-and-twenty years; where they had died, and all the family history he could collect of each. Comparing the dates of their death with the period of the infamous transaction in Switzerland, there resulted a striking coincidence between that event and the death of a sir Everard Beauchamp, which actually took place at Basle. We made inquiries concerning the Beauchamp history, and the character of the dowager: conviction of the important truth, that we had found the lost Antonio, was the consequence. Pursuing our discovery, we traced this lady Beauchamp, and her pretended son, to Lisbon. The fatigue of incessant travelling, added to anxiety, at length overcame my friend della Torre, and I have been compelled to leave him at Lisbon under the influence of a fever. The packet which was to convey them to England was already about to sail.

My friend implored me never to lose sight of them. I accompanied them in the packet, and, with the utmost exertions, have, as you perceive, followed them to London: and I hail this interview, at my very entrance, as a most happy augury of ultimate success."

"Disguising, as well as I was able, the state of my feelings at this singular, this providential corroborance of my own story, I offered my assistance to the faithful friend of don Antonio, and immediately conducted him to my solicitor's; to whom, in a previous interview, I explained the wonderful coincidence of events.

"He earnestly advised me to adhere to my resolution of remaining concealed for the present, and I therefore took leave of don Almeida, as his former acquaintance Hargrave, and pursued my journey to Cumberland.

"There, Amelia, another trial awaited me, which I could not withstand. Accident led the noble youth, whom I glory to

call my son, to seek shelter for a night in the very cottage I had made my hiding-place. In the morning I saw him, and, overpowered by my feelings, could not help betraying myself to be his father!

"There, too, Amelia, soon afterwards, I saw thee. Disguised beyond even your recognition, I stood at the door of old Hudson's cot, in your park, and listened with tears of delight to your voice. I saw also your lovely daughter. But I must stop:—it is not yet safe to anticipate a happy evening to our days; and yet, surely Providence will not suffer the wicked to triumph for ever! Don Antonio is daily expected in London, and in the course of a few hours after his arrival the contents of this packet will perhaps be the topic of the day.

"That you might not be taken by surprise, I have imposed upon myself this task. May the issue of impending events be such

as, I know, the heart of Amelia sighs for! and something allied to happiness, though tinctured for ever with painful regrets, may yet fall to the lot of

"ALFRED BEAUCHAMP."

CHAPTER II.

A FASHIONABLE PHYSICIAN.

THE catastrophe which took place at the Roseville-House masquerade became the topic of general conversation in the circles of fashion.

The discoveries occasioned by that event were variously represented through the *media* of a hundred different narrators. Among these one of the most industrious was sir Felix Fascinate, M. D. F. R. S. the adored Esculapius of the fashionable world.

To these high honours, and their golden concomitants, sir Felix had arisen from a very humble origin; a circumstance that would have greatly added to the splendour of his present rank in life, had he not, with match-

less effrontery and revolting ingratitude, the offspring of low, unmanly pride, denied the obligations which he owed to the noblest source of gratuitous education which the world can boast.

From that asylum he was launched into the world with those advantages which formed the base of his prosperity. Nature had bestowed upon him a fair and prepossessing exterior, while his heart was subject to no inconvenient impressions of stern integrity, nor any of those troublesome impulses which are felt by the children of sensibility. He could bow where it was profitable to bow, without considering whether the homage were worthily or unworthily bestowed; he could smile with most fascinating sweetness of face, without the least internal sensation of pleasure or delight. He could adopt, with implicit confidence, the newest and most fashionable theories of medicine, without the fatigue of any mental inquiry into their effects; and in the art of conversation he was unrivalled.

With these qualifications doctor Fascinate emerged at once from obscurity to celebrity. Instead of devoting the prime of his life to the laborious study of an art which the dullards make matter of conscience to understand —instead of dangling in the train of veteran practitioners, and listening with patient drudgery to their lectures—Dr. Fascinate commenced his career by giving lectures himself; and instead of walking till the accumulation of fees enabled him to ride, he at once dashed into debt for the purchase of a chariot and pair, wisely considering these articles as the implements of his business, and not as the reward of his labours.

Perhaps, however, even the talents of Dr. Fascinate would have been scarcely equal to the acquirement of successful notoriety in the metropolis, where there is so little lack of similar qualifications of impudence and self-love. It therefore was a master-stroke of policy that determined him to make his *debut* on a less crowded stage. The other cities,

and the provincial towns of the kingdom, he was aware, had generally their succession of hereditary physicians; and the practice in these confined circles was also below the point of his ambition, which was to obtain, by any sacrifices, the reputation of a fashionable physician. In yielding up London, therefore, as the scene of his *debut*, he by no means lost sight of the fashionable world; but as the task appeared, even to him, rather too impudent to face the whole host of that people assembled in their winter cantonments, he resolved to watch their summer migrations, and to follow that division of them which afforded him the greatest prospect of success.

This system of proceeding conducted him to one of those marine spots called watering-places, where, by an unaccountable phrensy, tribes of the fashionable world congregate in proportionally greater masses even than in the metropolis, and where the manners, customs, and extravagant habits of these people

are imitated, for two, three, or four months of summer, by many who all the rest of the year live like rational beings.

It was at this place that Dr. Fascinate had the good fortune to attract the notice of the duchess of Drinkwater, and in less than half a dozen visits he became the favourite of her grace. The patronage of the duchess of Drinkwater alone amply repaid the expenses of the speculative *debut* of Dr. Fascinate: and the circle to which she introduced him, and to which she trumpeted his praises, in the course of a summer dubbed him a fashionable physician.

He followed in the train of her grace to London, and wherever her influence opened to him a door, his own address and conversation generally insured him an invitation to repeat the visit.

It has never been said that Dr. Fascinate was successful in relieving the duchess from any attacks of disease; but it has been said that his aid was eminently useful in reliev-

ing her grace from the care of two unmarried daughters, and consigning that charge to two noble dukes. Whatever be the nature of the services of the doctor, he was rewarded by an appointment at court, the honour of knighthood, and the most profitable practice in London.

Some few years had elapsed since the patroness of sir Felix had found it expedient to employ his talents. The cause of her visit to the metropolis this winter, it has been said, was the marriage of her daughter lady Seraphina. She had not, on her first arrival, absolutely determined that the marquis of Arberry should be the man; but she had lately received hints from lady Aurora Rumble, who was immensely rich, that she intended to make the marquis her sole heir, and these hints had perfectly decided the fluctuating opinion of the duchess.

The adventures at Roseville-House, on the night of the masquerade, had demonstrated to her grace the partiality of lady Emily or

Edward; and her chief task now was, by every measure possible to impress this fact upon the marquis of Arberry, whose jealousy was already alarmed. For this purpose lady Aurora Rumble had been invited to Drink-water-House, two days after the masquerade, under pretence of looking at some old needle-work, which, tradition said, was wrought by Mary, queen of Scots: but the real purpose of the invitation was, that the old lady might listen to a dialogue purposely planned between the duchess and sir Felix.

It was now three o'clock, and her grace's morning levee was at its height. A considerable party were assembled in her dressing-room, among whom was lady Aurora, who had furnished a fund of entertainment to the quizzing part of the assembly, when the name of sir Felix Fascinate was announced, and immediately there was a clamour of "Now we shall hear all about it;"—"Sir Felix is sure to know;"—"I long to hear the truth;"—"I am quite impatient to

learn the particulars;" and similar expressions.

In a minute sir Felix entered the room. Tall in stature, robustly formed, and of a florid complexion; he commanded by his appearance a species of respect, while, at the same time, the smile that was constantly in use to exhibit a remarkably handsome set of teeth, was inexpressibly insinuative. He was dressed in a scarlet jockey frock, striped waistcoat, with buskins, and boots; he carried a switch, a round hat, and a glove in one hand, while the other was held out with a winning courtesy in salutation of the company.

"Bless me!" whispered lady Aurora Rumble to a young man who stood sipping chocolate near her: "Pray, sir, is that jockey-looking gentleman the famous sir Fascinate Felix, the physician?"

"Why not!" said the youth; then bursting into a loud laugh—"Oh gad, I have it! Sir Felix—sir Felix—do, pray, satisfy lady Rumble that you are *bonâ fide* an M. D.;

for I believe you are the first physician her ladyship has beheld in a black crop-scratch and a riding-dress: she has resided in the country from the days of sixteen-tailed wigs and gold-headed canes."

"Why, my dear lady Rumble," said the duchess, "we never see such things now except on the stage, or at a masquerade. Apropos of masquerades—"

"Aye, sir Felix, you can explain," said one.

"Do, good man," said another, "tell us the truth of this masquerade story."

"Is it true," said a third, "that sir Alfred Beauchamp, who was supposed to have been assassinated in Italy, is alive and now in London, and that the young man called Montagu—"

"Now every body be dumb, and sir Felix will tell the whole story," said the duchess.

"You shall have the particulars, ladies, as well as I have been able to collect them,"

said six Felix. "You all know what passed at the masquerade: I was called in with sir Charles Bliche and Astley Cooper; Mr. Beauchamp had, from the loss of blood—"

"What, then he is really Mr. Beauchamp, sir Alfred's son?" said one of the company.

"Oh yes; I thought that was universally known. Well then, as I was saying, ladies, we found Mr. Beauchamp had fainted from loss of blood; but after an examination of the wound, it was found that the direction of the dagger—"

"Well, well, never mind the wound and the direction of the dagger—the young man is alive, and likely to live, I hear," said the duchess.

"I will not say positively there is no danger; but, if his mind can be kept in a state of tranquillity, I apprehend no serious consequences."

"But, pray, sir Felix," said the duchess,

" is it true that lady Emily Roseville has been delirious ever since, and calls out incessantly for her dear preserver, as she terms Mr. Montagu?—Beauchamp—I beg the gentleman's pardon."

" Oh, there your grace must pardon me, indeed: secrets, family secrets, which in the way of our profession cannot be altogether concealed from us, should ever be deemed sacred deposits, and never on any account would I—"

" Nay, but it is no great secret that lady Emily had a tender partiality for the young man," interrupted the duchess: " you know he saved her life! And then to see *any body* bleeding to death is quite shocking; but imagine that person to be a lover—"

" A lover!" said lady Rumble, " your grace mistakes prodigiously: don't you know that lady Emily is on the point of being married to my young cousin the marquis?"

" Oh, my dear madam," said her grace,

" I have known things of this sort carried far nearer to consummation, and after all come to nothing. There was lord Dormer, who paid his addresses to the daughter of Hicks, the rich taylor, in Bond-street—a special license was obtained, and whole skins of deeds and settlements were drawn out, and almost signed, when his lordship's courage yielded to the ridicule of his friends, and the poor taylor was obliged to cut up his parchment deeds, and make measures of his daughter's settlements. To be sure, matters have been carried to some length between lady Emily and the marquis—yet I should not be surprised if some discontented friend were to whisper even yet in his ear, that people do not a little laugh at the blindness of some other people."

Lady Rumble's long lace ruffles waved like flags on a signal-post, through the fidgeting of her elbows, during this preconcerted speech of the duchess.

" Really," said sir Felix, " I can't help

expressing my conviction, that there would be an immense deal more happiness in the married world, if the inclination of the parties were taken into consideration by parents in the higher ranks of life."

"And yet, sir Felix," said the duchess, "with your extensive means of observation, how many instances of an opposite nature you must have seen! I don't mean particularly to allude to poor lady Emily Roseville and the marquis's case."

"Nay, nay, your grace is precipitate;—pardon me, your grace is really precipitate: no, no, whatever my opinion relative to the nature of lady Emily Roseville's malady may be, I appeal to the candour of every body present, that I have not expressed so much as your grace's language may be construed to mean. It is true, indeed, that the young lady has called upon the name of Mr. Montagu in the tenderest manner during fits of delirium: this is a fact that will of course

transpire, as nurses and servants, we all know, are not over delicate in such cases; but then I have not said that all this may not be the effects of a disturbed imagination, and may have no sort of connexion with any impression made upon the heart prior to the present indisposition."

"In my opinion, sir Felix," said lady Rumble, on whose mind this dialogue had produced the desired effect, "the circumstances you have just mentioned can be considered in no other light than as strong symptoms of love; and, old as I am, I have not forgotten what it is to be a victim of the tender passion. I see this affair of my cousin, the marquis, quite in a different view to that in which his father the duke represented it to me before I came to London; and all I say is, that if he persists in his barbarous persecution of this poor young creature, not a penny of my property, nor an acre of the Rumble estate, shall he touch."

" Noble! noble!" said sir Felix: " I protest your ladyship's spirit is worthy of the proudest days of chivalry."

" Noble indeed!" echoed the duchess.

" Noble indeed!" echoed a whole roomful of sycophants.

" Oh, I have no notion of such tyrannical doings," said the old lady; " and it never shall be said that I encouraged them: I'll see lady Roseville this morning, and—"

" Shall I have the pleasure of your ladyship's company?" interrupted sir Felix: " my *vis-à-vis* is in waiting, and Roseville-House is the very next place on my list. It will be a superlative honour, of which I shall be extremely proud," continued he with a smile and a bow, which the heart of the old lady could not withstand.

" Really, sir Felix, there is no resisting your politeness," said her ladyship, at the same time bridling her long neck and curtsying: " I will order the duke's carriage to follow us, and accept the honour of your offer.

Such gallantry is now-a-days too rare to be slighted."

"Oh, my dear lady Rumble!" said this professor of insinuation, again smiling, cringing, and pressing her ladyship's hand.

The duchess could scarcely conceal her triumphant joy. The success of her pander in this onset of the matrimonial negotiation, which they had jointly planned, was beyond her most sanguine hopes: she applauded him by smiles and glances.

"But you are running away, sir Felix, without telling us all about this shocking Belloni," said a lady.

"Briefly, then, my lady," said sir Felix, "the affair at present stands thus:—Sir Alfred Beauchamp flew to Roseville-House the moment he was sent for; a very affecting interview ensued between lady Roseville and the baronet; for you must know they were actually betrothed to each other before sir Alfred went abroad. He was instantly recognised by her ladyship and Dr. Hoare, who,

with old Adam Osborn, and Potts, the solicitor, identified his person. Well, the surgeons were scarcely out of the house, when the lawyers came in; there were Erskine, Garrow, Plowden, and a whole posse of common law and chancery people; and besides them, Ford and Graham, and all these sort of people from Bow-street. Examination and re-examination, commitments and re-commitments took place, as fast as possible, for four-and-twenty hours. The result, however, is, that sir Alfred will, without difficulty or delay, be easily reinstated in his rights; but the further elucidation of the Italian's story is deferred till the arrival of a Don somebody, a Spaniard, who is expected this very day in London."

Sir Felix now handed lady Rumble to his *vis-à-vis*, and, in the course of their short drive to Roseville-House, succeeded completely in winning the confidence and admiration of the old lady. He perfectly con-

vinced her, that not only would the marquis render lady Emily miserable by prosecuting his addresses, but, in *strict confidence*, and under the most solemn injunctions of secrecy, he acquainted her, that from a very severe study of a disorder that had lately seized the lady Seraphina, daughter of his friend the duchess of Drinkwater, he had discovered that her malady was love, and he felt no hesitation in saying further, that he had discovered also the object; and that the marquis of Arberry was the man!

"Astonishing!" exclaimed the old lady.

"Your ladyship may rest assured of the fact!—and, for my part, it strikes me, that though the fortune of lady Seraphina may fall a few thousands short of lady Emily's, yet, my lady, as I was saying, it does certainly strike me, that, in point of family connexion, between ourselves, there is no comparison. To be the son-in-law of a duke, and the brother-in-law of two dukes,

is some set-off against a little more wealth; especially when one considers how that wealth has been scraped together."

"Sir Felix, you speak like a man of sense, and a gentleman who knows the world."

"Your ladyship's approbation flatters me extremely—I am proud of it, believe me: but, my lady, independently of these considerations, what happiness can your ladyship's kinsman expect in this union, while there is so decided an attachment to another object? It would have ill become me to have said so much before a bevy of young coxcombs and giddy girls; but, to a lady of your ladyship's sense and experience, I do not scruple to say, I have no hesitation in declaring, that I am positively convinced of the fact, that lady Emily Roseville is as violently and romantically in love with this young man, this Beauchamp, as ever Thisbe was with Pyramus, or Juliet with Romeo! But, in saying so much, I have no other view than prevent-

ing certain misery; and happy should I be, if, through any influence of your ladyship, a hint might reach the ear of the marquis of Arberry, in a delicate way, that there is a lovely and most amiable woman who views him with a lover's eye. If by this means his attention may be turned from persecuting lady Emily to bestowing his regards elsewhere, lord Roseville may, in time, be prevailed upon to think of Mr. Beauchamp as a son-in-law, and thus a double happiness would ensue!"

"How humane, how benevolent, sir Felix, to interest yourself thus for the unhappy! You are indeed fulfilling the duties of a physician of the mind, as well as the body—'going about,' as one may say, 'doing good.' Sir Felix, you have placed me under infinite obligations to you, and it shall not be through any want of exertion on my part if your benevolent designs are not fully completed."

Here the carriage stopped at Roseville-

House; and after a short consultation had been held, sir Felix again ascended his *vis-à-vis* to proceed in his morning tour to a score of noble families, in most of which he carried on intrigues, of one description or another, under the mask of a fascinating and fashionable physician.

CHAPTER III.

A PRESENTATION AT COURT.

"CONGRATULATE me, Cecilia—the star of Belgrave's destinies is once more lord of the ascendant!"

Such was the opening of a letter from the duchess of Belgrave to her sister. It continued thus:—

"The scene at the Roseville masquerade has been followed by events so marvellous, that, I learn, a certain wonder-monger has already manufactured them into a romance, *translated from the German!* which is to become the subject of a drama for Drury-Lane, a romantic melo-drama for Covent-Garden, and grand pantomimic spectacles

for Astley's, Sadler's Wells, and the Circus.

"That this report be true I will not positively vouch; but this I know, that such materials for the mysterious and marvellous do not often occur in real life. Merlin with his wand, or Harlequin with his sword, never wrought more striking metamorphoses than our woodman, and his little agent, the solicitor.

"Here were the other day a lady Beauchamp, a sir Everard Beauchamp, and a signor Belloni.—Enter a woodman—heigh presto—change!—lady Beauchamp and Belloni become instantly two dæmons, or two evil genii, whose power is broken as by magic, and themselves consigned to punishment as suddenly as don Juan is conveyed to the infernal regions. The Beauchamps, unwilling to blaze their story to the world, have delivered them over to the Spaniards. They are by this time on their way to Spain, where the arm of Justice will at

least deprive them of all means of further mischief to mankind, by an imprisonment for life.

" Sir Everard is metamorphosed into the son of don Antonio della Torre, and, with his father, has also returned to Spain, where their testimony is necessary in the criminal process against the Italian culprits.

" Edward Montagu is as suddenly changed from the pennyless dependent of lord Roseville, into the heir of an English baronet, with an estate of twenty thousand pounds a year; and, after having performed all these wonderful changes on others, the performer concludes by changing himself from a woodman into the father of this very Montagu, and becomes the real sir Alfred Beauchamp, of Beauchamp Abbey, Cumberland, after a long journey, as it was supposed, into the other world. The meetings and embraces, and explanations and sighs, and tears and starts, you will, of course, fill up in your imagination, as they

were quite in the usual style of those sort of things.

" Now, is not all this marvellous?—and yet all this is true! What, then, will you say, Cecilia, when I tell you, that I have wonders in store still more wonderful! What, for instance, do you think of the duchess of Belgrave's reformation? You laugh, and say, that would be a miracle! Well, child, I don't know why a modern miracle may not be wrought, which certainly will be the case if I should reform; but who do you guess, now, is the apostle? When you hear, you will not despair of his power—for it is the very identical wonder-working woodman, sir Alfred Beauchamp. He has become an inmate of Belgrave House, and—but I must proceed in the order of events.

" Know, then, sir Felix Fascinate has completely failed in his hunt after a third duke for his patroness. Arberry, the elegant Arberry! will, after all, be my——oh

lud! oh lud! oh lud!—I won't write the word; but he will, I have every reason to believe, marry my daughter. Thus came the affair about:—The artful and insinuating sir Felix succeeded just so far in his plan, as to convince Arberry that lady Emily Roseville was dying of a certain disease of the heart, called love; and the object of her affections was Mr. Alfred Beauchamp, ci-devant Edward Montagu: old lady Aurora Rumble withdrew from the treaty; Arberry threw up; and lord Roseville blustered and stormed, and cast some severe reflections on sir Alfred Beauchamp; poor lady Roseville wept; but lady Emily, amidst the general distress, has gradually recovered her health.

"If this said earl, now, were a rational creature, there is the most easy remedy in the world for all these disappointments and disorders. Mr. Alfred Beauchamp adores the adorer; and nothing could be conceived more agreeable to the young man's papa,

and the young lady's mamma, who were lovers in days of yore, than the union of their offspring. The idea has been started; but the earl is inexorable; nay, worse, he is absolutely jealous of this resurrection from the dead; not that he doubts the honour, perhaps, but the heart of his countess: and though he has not behaved with absolute rudeness to sir Alfred and his son, his coldness has driven them from his mansion to that of your humble servant, who, be it known unto you, was in very early life his play-fellow!

"To say I admire and love the baronet, is but a poor and faint description of my feelings: such a human creature only drops once in a thousand years among his brother mortals. It may be said of him, Cecilia, that he is not only good himself, but the cause of goodness in others. Whether he has any secret magic charm in his possession I know not; but he contrives to be

as agreeable to old folks as to young ones; as much in favour with the grave as with the gay; all our moral people adore him; and even the most profligate respect him.

"Now, after all, you will suspect this praise to be the flattering reward of his partiality to me, when I tell you, that he hates a certain duchess, whose insolence has sometimes pained your sister! No—I wrong him—he hates nobody, for he is all benevolence; but he does not like the duchess of Drinkwater. Arberry is influenced entirely by his opinion; and I believe I owe to sir Alfred Beauchamp the proud triumph of seeing his future dukedom surrendered at the feet of my daughter, in spite of the artifices of her grace of Drinkwater, and her agent sir Felix. But, Cecilia, though this alone would, I confess, have been a rich cordial to my aching heart, it would not have wrought its cure; and yet, if such a mental healing be not indeed beyond all human skill, I do not

despair of owing even that supremest blessing to sir Alfred Beauchamp.

* * * * * * * * *

" I was interrupted, Cecilia, by two marriageable young women, called lady Susan, and lady Caroline, as tall as myself, and much handsomer than I ever was; whom I have been compelled by sir Alfred Beauchamp, even in public, to call my daughters! Le Brun had just brought home Susan's court dress. She is in as high a flutter as a new actress just about to present herself before a London audience. She is to be presented to-morrow. A birth-day drawing-room is tremendous to a novice; and I assure you, I am reminded every minute of its being her first appearance! How you would laugh to see our rehearsals! while I, like a veteran performer, instruct, encourage, and applaud. Poor Atkinson is absolutely fatigued to death with *standing up* one minute for the lord of the bed-chamber, to whom I present the card, with lady Susan's style and title; and

state the occasion of her presentation to be her first entrance into the world. Atkinson simpers and titters; the girl looks grave. "Come now, there's a good creature, be serious, Atkinson, consider how provoking it would be to be laughed at." Then Atkinson personifies the king or the queen, and I the lord of the bed-chamber in waiting. I name her ladyship to the mock king; Susan curtsies most gracefully, and Atkinson salutes most majestically. But to-morrow we shall have the real scene to act; and if I can reserve spirits sufficient for the task, you shall have a faithful account of the performance.

* * * * * * *

"I have escaped, Cecilia, from the duke's parlour, where the conjuror sir Alfred has chained even that votary of Bacchus to a sober game of cassino, in spite of a political dinner at which Norfolk himself presides. If the power of this extraordinary man, which has increased and is increasing, be not speedily

diminished, I verily believe that the duke of Belgrave will be added to the list of his wonders, and be metamorphosed from a three-bottle man to the image of temperance itself.

"But now to fulfill my promise—how shall I begin? Let me see—

"This morning being the day appointed for the celebration of the birth of our beloved queen, the same was ushered in by ringing of bells and——" Oh lud, that is too much in the newspaper style! I cannot *unself* or *unsex* myself sufficiently to write in the narrative form; it must be I—I—I and all about me—me—me. And thus will I begin:—

"This morning, about nine, Atkinson waked me."

"What hour is it?"

"Nine, your grace."

"Is the house on fire?"

"La, no, your grace, but you forget what day it is: the dear ladies have left their chamber an hour ago."

"Oh, bless me, I had forgotten the court."

"Aye, but, my lady, you did not forget it the night before this day four-and-twenty years! I dare say your head ran on it all night long——"

"You seem resolved to let your tongue run all day long. What should you know about me four-and-twenty years ago? Pray were you on my mother's nursery establishment?"

"Atkinson was piqued, turned upon her heel, and was leaving the room.

"You will readily believe that 'four-and-twenty years ago' did not operate as an emollient upon my wrath for being disturbed so early.

"What *are* you trotting about so for, Atkinson? One might as well make one's bed at the foot of Vesuvius as be subject to such perpetual shocks of *room-quakes!*"

"Down plumped the offended waiting-maid on a chair.

"Pray do me the favour to ring for Ann," said I; "I perceive I shall have no assistance from you."

"She rung the bell.

"Are you really mad, good woman? I did not bid you discharge an electric battery through my poor head!"

"Ann appeared, and poor Atkinson made a pouting exit.

"Pray, Ann, what is it occasions all this uproar?"

"My lady, the duke has only this minute resolved to go to court; and so Mr. Blandish is running all over the house, and hurrying every body to death to get my lord's things ready."

"Up rose I in amazement, scarcely less astonished than if I had heard the world was at an end.

"What do you mean, Ann? The duke go to court? You mean, to coursing. Did he not go out early this morning with sir Alfred and Mr. Beauchamp?"

"Yes, my lady; but they have returned some time, and are now in the stable-yard looking at the new carriages."

"New carriages! Is the girl mad?" thought I, "or are they making me play the part of Nell in The Devil to pay? New carriages!" again exclaimed I—but, recollecting myself, had sufficient prudence to conceal my surprise.

"Do send Atkinson to me again, Ann," said I: "lady Susan will want you."

"Atkinson," said I, as she entered, "what is all this about?"

"Oh, my dear, dear lady, what a wonderful man this sir Alfred is! They say he can twist the duke round his little finger. Two such delightful carriages I never saw."

"What carriages?"

"A coach and a chariot, my lady."

"Oh, I suppose sir Alfred has bought them to take into Cumberland."

"It is very odd your grace's arms and coronet should be so beautifully painted on the pannels then, and the hammercloths

fringed to suit the new liveries. Besides, my lady——"

"Well, be quick, there's a good Atkinson! Here, tie this ribband, and I'll see myself the plot of this new comedy.—There, thank you.—This is a very pretty lace, but I don't like the cap. Well, after all, Atty, this face is not so bad, considering it was seen at court *four-and-twenty years ago, you know.*"

"La, now your grace——"

"There, hold your tongue; where is the breakfast?"

"In the duke's library.'

"In the library were assembled the duke, his son and daughters, and sir Alfred and Mr. Beauchamp! I had summoned two or three sentences of raillery to the tip of my tongue, but they all flew away at the sight of my foolish—I beg his pardon, my simple lord; who intending no doubt to put on a smile of self-satisfaction, looked so vastly silly, that I was obliged to bite my lips till they almost bled, knowing it to be my bounden

duty not to make game of my lord and master. "My dear Evelina," said his grace, awkwardly swinging his arms about as he approached to meet me, "my dear Evelina, I give you—I wish you—that is, I wish you joy of this happy day."

"Had not that incomprehensible sir Alfred been present, spite of all the twinges of conscience, I should have laughed as loud as the duchess of Drinkwater at one of her own jokes. The dignity of his countenance kept me in something like order,—till seeing my wicked disposition, and the duke's uncomfortable situation in a scene so new, he in an instant relieved him and punished me.

"Your grace," said he, advancing with a provoking ease, "your grace will permit me to mingle my sincere congratulations with those of your family on so happy an occasion. It must indeed be a proud and joyful day to the hearts of her parents, when they are enabled to take by the hand a young lady like this, and, introducing her to their

sovereign, his family and his court, say, 'This is our daughter.' And I am sure the glittering ceremony of the hour will not be the sole occupation of lady Susan's thoughts this day. She will reflect, that thus publicly acknowledged as the offspring of an illustrious house, and installed as it were member of a court not more celebrated for its splendour than its virtues, the eyes of mankind will henceforth regard her with no common scrutiny; and she will thus fortify herself with a second conscience, in a high sense of honour resulting from the recollection of what the world expects from the daughter of a duke, and a lady of the court of Great Britain!"

"My lords and gentlemen," said I with an air of mock gravity, and a curtsy almost to the ground, "I thank you for your very dutiful and loyal address, than which the recorder of London never delivered a better at the foot of the throne: but, alas, I am not a Roman matron, this is no Roman virgin, and I must

candidly confess, that the idea of having a daughter of sufficient age to be presented carries with it such an ugly memento of the age of her mother, as greatly detracts from that joy and pride which you so poetically ascribe to my heart on the occasion. And then, as to this young woman's second conscience, her high sense of honour and that kind of thing, I shrewdly suspect that her imagination and her heart, for at least some days to come, will be so full of feathers and courtiers, that, were you Epictetus himself, your moral sentences would find no room."

"Ah, madam," replied sir Alfred, "I too well know that most young ladies, and some fine ladies that can scarcely be called young, plead constantly a want of leisure for a want of thought. Now I would endeavour, you perceive, to sprinkle improvement even upon the feathers to which you allude."

"A very fine thought, sir Alfred, really! Follow it up, my dear sir, and let us have

Beauchamp's Meditations at a drawing-room to bind up with Hervey's among the tombs."

"A truce to bantering," said the duke. "Evelina, seriously speaking, I have to obtain your forgiveness for a folly I have committed; and am not easy till I receive it. I meant to surprise you with a new carriage for yourself, and another for lady Susan and her sister; but, upon reflection, I am convinced there is more vanity than generosity in such conduct. These are trifles in which your taste and opinion ought to have been consulted, and I beg your pardon for omitting it. Convince me that you forgive me by accepting them, and suffering me to accompany you to court."

"Oh, my lord!" said I with a rebellious tear in my eye, resting my head on his shoulder, "this, this is preaching to the heart; this is indeed the virtue whose loveliness must in time make a convert even of me!"

"This part of the scene, Cecilia, caused my proud heart some pain, and my face

some blushes: the address of young Beauchamp, however, drew off the attention of the girls, while sir Alfred engrossed that of my son; and strange, yet true, in a few minutes I felt myself by the side of my husband happier than I have been for years.

"Oh, my dear sister, if it were not for that load of ugly, hideous debts, which all the duke's property would scarcely remove,—if it were not for that,—I begin to think, late in life as it is, I might even yet exchange the fever of dissipation that now consumes me, for the wholesome glow of rational enjoyment; and, instead of flying from reflection to inebriating pleasures, be happy from principle and reason.

"But how strangely I ramble from the object of my letter! Habits of egotism, you perceive, are not easily relinquished: let me then transport you to the drawing-room at once.

"We made a prodigiously fine cavalcade.

The new chariot, certainly as tasteful as any launched on the occasion, contained the duke and duchess of Belgrave in their new characters of Darby and Joan!

"The new coach, lady Susan and the marquis of Arberry.

"The duke of Delaware's coach boasted lady Aurora Rumble and the old duke of Delaware; and the marquis of Arberry's chariot closed the procession with sir Alfred and Mr. Beauchamp, presented on recovering their estates.

"We arrived at St. James's early, that the novices might be gratified with the whole scene. The crowd was excessive. Perhaps you have not been informed, that since the king has gone so much seldomer to court, all the presentations of ladies which used formerly to take place at the queen's common drawing-rooms, are now reserved for the birth-days. This arrangement of course adds to the usual attractions of the birth-

day, and the squeeze in consequence is almost intolerable.

"You will readily conceive how impracticable it would be for their majesties to go round the circle, as was customary when you were in London. The ceremony is quite altered. About two, the king entered, having passed through the anti-room, where you know the children belonging to Christ's Hospital, and destined for the king's navy, annually are presented to his majesty, who inspects their drawings and mathematical exercises. Sir Alfred Beauchamp informed me, as we passed by this group of future heroes of our navy, that sir Felix Fascinate received his education in the foundation of which they are a part, and that he is now ashamed of it. "What despicable pride! At the court of Bonaparte," said sir Alfred with warmth, "such a man would deny his country, and at that of Constantinople his faith! It is a noble institution,"

continued he, " and I wish it may obtain as much patronage from the court as it already receives from the city; for, if ever the claims of charity or policy entitled a royal foundation to an extraordinary portion of royal regard, it is Christ's Hospital."

" From this inspection, his majesty entered the drawing-room, attended by the lord chamberlain and his other officers of state as usual; the queen followed, attended also by her lord chamberlain. At the door of the inner room her majesty's train was resigned by the page of honour to lady Harrington, who threw it gracefully over her arm, and kept it there during the whole of the drawing-room.

" The princesses followed their majesties, each led by an equerry.

" The king and queen immediately took their stations, and the ode was performed. The vocal parts were admirably sustained by Walsh, Knyvet, Sale, and Smith. The music was a selection from the works of

Handel, and was creditable to the taste of sir William Parsons. The poetry, by much too good to be forgotten with the day, I have requested Susan to transcribe, and ornament with suitable vignettes as an elegant memento of the day: I really think the fire of the laureat, Pye, increases with his years.

"After the performance of the ode the queen took her station between the second and third window, where the company are introduced, instead of her majesty's walking round the circle. The hearts of the novices now began to throb. Oh, how strongly did the fluttering Susan remind me of what I was, and what my feelings were when in her situation!

"She performed her part of the ceremony, however, extremely well; and believe me, Cecilia, the loyalty of principle was warmed into real friendship and the loyalty of the heart, by the very gracious reception with which my daughter was honoured, and the flattering notices she re-

ceived from a band of the loveliest princesses that ever graced a court.

"The number of presentations was so great, that it was extremely late before the drawing-room closed. Among them, besides the three I have named, were lord Barton and lady Emily Roseville: they were attended by the earl and countess. Their Italian friends, and the old cynic Dr. Hoare, were in the outer rooms as spectators.

"The drawing-room, towards the close, actually differed in nothing from the crush-room at the opera on a very crowded night. Only conceive the confusion of feathers and fans, of swords and hats! Here the corner of a tall gentleman's hat, wedged fast under his arm, sticking in the wig and carrying away the ostrich ornaments of a short lady: there the fan of a six-foot countess inflicting the punishment of blindness upon a little three-foot beau; while, emblematical of the power of Venus over Mars, sword after sword surrendered to opposing hoops! No

rank, no sex, could possibly receive exemption from the general crush.

"Released at length from this splendid and animated prison, we returned to Belgrave House. It delighted my heart, which, with all its follies and its foibles, is in truth patriotic, to listen to sir Alfred Beauchamp's praises of England and of the English court.

"Look round the globe," said the baronet, "and point me out a court like that we have just left! A king adored by his people,

> "Who loves the law, respects his bounds,
> And reigns content within them!"
>
> COWPER.

A queen, upon whose ermine, slander, that is so busy about courts, has not left a spot! Princes conspicuous as much by their manly virtues, as by their exalted stations! and lovely amiable princesses, in whose persons are combined the virtues that dignify human nature, the accomplishments that embellish social life, and the graces that adorn a throne!"

CHAPTER IV.

A SECRET.

A FEW days after the drawing-room, the duchess of Belgrave again addressed her sister the lady Forrester, thus :—

"Another long letter, Cecilia! By the bye, my dear, I hope you have carefully preserved the numerous epistles I have written you since your retreat to the North ; for it is impossible to estimate how large a fortune they may produce to your posterity in the year of our Lord two thousand and odd. Should the rage for reading posthumous correspondence continue, and the value of the manuscripts increase in only a common ratio, I have no doubt that the letters of the duchess of Belgrave will at least purchase

all the timber which at that time will be growing on the Belgrave estate.

"Having furnished you with this *valuable* hint respecting the preservation of my letters, I now in return call upon your gratitude and your affection to be careful in concealing them at present, lest they should fall into the hands of some kind friend, who might be desirous of amusing the world with their publication before the two hundred years I allude to have rolled over my grave; as the rage for anecdotes of *celebrated living characters* almost equals that for the correspondence of the dead.

"Our indefatigable reformer, sir Alfred, continues his Herculean labour with undaunted zeal: but I suspect that his own son, young Morality, will require a little of his parental inspection and tender remonstrances; so that a few lectures less will fall upon the shoulders of your humble servant.

"We breakfasted this morning, for

the sixth time, *en famille*, in the library; and if this symptom does not sufficiently indicate our rapid approach to a state of *domestification*, be it further known, that after our social *dejeûné*, all the congregation at that meeting adjourned by unanimous consent to the music-room, to rehearse a MS. piece with which we mean soon to astonish the good folks at a concert.

"My dear lord," said I to a certain duke, "is it possible that any temptation can keep *you* from your grooms?—Don't you want to know how the mash agreed with Tartar, and whether Coleman has looked at Sancho's hurt on the off fetlock? Pray do not let our crotchets and quavers detain your grace from your wonted avocations."

"Ah, Evelina, Evelina," said the man, (I suspect he was prompted by that conjuror Beauchamp,) "how has it happened that to-day for the *first time* the temptation has been tried?"

"Come along, good folks," said I, and led to the music-room.

"In crossing the hall one of the footmen put a card into my hand, saying, "The carriage waits, my lady."

"Lady Roseville, I protest!" exclaimed I: "is there any one else in the carriage?"

"Three other ladies."

"Lady Emily and the Italian girls, I dare say," said I, looking steadfastly at young Beauchamp, whose crest was erect at the name. "I think you must say, 'Not at home,' said I, still fixing my eye on this Romeo the second—"it's so abominably early an hour!"

"Out leaped his watch: "It's one o'clock, your grace: could you have supposed it so late?" said he.

"I shook my head and smiled at him. He understood me. "Well, well," said I, "they jest at scars who never felt a wound:" but I will not play tricks with those little

arrows which a certain infant archer has left in the heart of—never mind who! So say 'At home,' Patrick,—'We are in the music-room.'

"Recollecting, Cecilia, that though *my younger sister*, yours is not the age of romance, when 'lovers' eyes and lovers' sighs,' and 'hearts and darts,' and 'Cupid's fires and fond desires,' are the only sounds pleasing to the ear; I pass over unnoticed all the tender glances, &c. &c. &c. which however did certainly take place between this pair of lovers!

"My attention was principally occupied in watching the looks and listening to the discourse of sir Alfred Beauchamp and lady Roseville, who really appear to have so completely disciplined their early passion, as to make it rather a doubtful point in my mind, whether their attachment even in youth was not something of the Platonic cast.

"Lady Emily has a remarkably fine voice. She was prevailed upon to favour us with a song, and gave us with sweet expression Billington's favourite rondo '*Si te perde*,' accom-

panied by Beauchamp in a style so finished, that it excited universal astonishment. The eyes of sir Alfred wandered from the singer to the musician, and from him to lady Roseville, while her ladyship's in the same manner met his; which to me, who you know am perfect mistress of the language of the eyes, plainly said or sung, 'Sure never pair were formed by nature,' &c. &c.

"Just as the song was concluded, and as Beauchamp stood with his back to the door conversing with lady Emily, it opened, and one of the prettiest female rustics I ever beheld appeared. Terrified almost to fainting at the sight of us great lords and ladies, with a blush and a country curtsy, this blooming Hebe closed the door and vanished.

"What does that woman want?" said the duke.

"I hope, not a husband," said my hopeful boy, alluding to her appearance.

"A mistake," said I: "she is probably looking for one of the servants."

"Though the young woman had scarcely

appeared ere she vanished, yet there was something so modest and pleasing in her beautiful face, that it strongly interested every one who had seen her.

" She is extremely young," said lady Roseville.

" And yet," said I, " she is evidently ' in that state which women wish to be who love their lords.'

" A rap at the door attracted universal attention, as every body concluded it was the former intruder.

" What can this mean ?" said I. " Is there nobody in waiting ?" and tripping to the door, I opened it myself.

" It was the same young woman.

" I humbly beg your pardon, please your ladyship," said she in a tone of unaffected simplicity, yet loud enough for every one to hear, " but I don't know where to go. While I was speaking to the gentleman at the gate, a grand coach came into the yard, and a great dog flew at me, ma'am, and

so I run up the steps into this fine hall. I couldn't help it, ma'am, or else I should have come in at the sarvants' door; and since I have been here I have asked several of the gentlemen walking about, to direct me; but they all tell me to ask somebody else, and to go here and there, till I lost myself, ma'am!"

"Well, never mind the mistake," said I: "what is your business?"

"I'm not any business, ma'am, but my brother is a carver and gilder, ma'am."

"Well, but I mean, what do you want?"

"I musn't tell, ma'am."

"Who do you want, then?"

"A young gentleman, ma'am."

"What's his name?"

"I don't know, ma'am."

"How are you to find him, then?"

"It's wrote down upon this card, ma'am."

"Mr. Beaucha[illegible]p, Belgrave House," exclaimed I, ere I recollected the consequence of what I was uttering.

"At that moment, young Beauchamp, who, Caroline tells me, during this dialogue, seemed bewildered how to act, rushed pale as death towards the door, and, throwing it back with a look of anger and vexation, said, "Why, why have you disregarded my injunctions? Did I not forbid you to come here?"

"Oh, indeed, indeed I couldn't help it," said the blushing intruder: "but not a soul knows poor Fanny's distress, your honour; my brother don't know that I'm come to you, sir."

"I thought it high time to close the door; and suffer all further explanation to take place behind the scenes. Never shall I forget the expressive countenances of the whole party assembled:—sir Alfred trembled with anxiety and surprise; lady Roseville seemed to feel equally for her daughter and poor Beauchamp; Arberry seemed petrified; something like a triumphant smile sat on the

lips of my hopeful son and heir, which seemed to say, "So much for morality!"

"I was sitting down to the piano, as the best method of relieving this dumb consternation, when my sapient lord put us all into confusion again by exclaiming to lady Emily, "Zounds, madam, you are tearing to pieces the song which every body praised so much just now!"

"The poor girl had actually strewed the carpet with fragments of the music of '*Si te perde.*' She blushed, she almost wept, but spoke not,—nor did any one else: this general silence was more mischievously expressive than the loudest scandal, for it spoke every one's conviction of something that was not to be told. How long it might have continued I know not, had not poor lady Emily, unable with every effort to conceal her indisposition, complained of sudden sickness, and requested to return home. Thus the sitting was dissolved.

"They had scarcely withdrawn, when young Beauchamp returned to the music-room, and, starting with surprise and mortification in his countenance, exclaimed:

"Is lady Emily gone?"

"Lady Emily gone!" repeated I with a smile. "Do your eyes confine themselves solely to the space she filled? Do you not perceive that the countess of Roseville, lady Paulina, and lady Selina, are also *gone?* Really, Mr. Beauchamp, I shall esteem it a favour, if you expect any more visits from this incognita, that you will apprise us of the honour; for it is absolutely provoking to frighten one's friends away in such a manner: lady Emily will not recover the shock this month."

"How unfortunate," said he, "that the only transaction of my life which I ever wished to conceal should thus be blazoned, and at such a moment too, when——"

"It was indeed provokingly *mal-a-propos*," said I.

"What will she think! Good God! what will every body think!" continued he. "I shall be the subject of general suspicion, without any opportunity of explaining and exculpating myself."

"Do you mean, then, to say, sir, that the latter would unavoidably follow the other?"

"I do, madam."

"Make me your confessor, then, and I will become your advocate."

"Never," replied he. "I would, if possible, conceal my transactions with this young woman from all the world, but most of all from you. Here, however, is one (alluding to sir Alfred, who stood leaning his head against the chimney-piece,) from whom it would be criminal designedly to hide a thought. I shall explain myself to him, madam; and on the influence of his report must rest all my hopes of regaining that esteem which is dearer to me than life, and of which it were the affectation of delicacy

to withhold declaring, I fear appearances have deprived me."

"The father and son then withdrew, leaving to a woman the greatest torment she can experience,—that of knowing *there is a secret*, without a chance of discovering what it is."

CHAPTER V.

A GRAND ROUT; OR, SEEING COMPANY.

THE curiosity of the duchess of Belgrave, which the singular appearance of the rustic *Incognita* had raised, was still further excited by the non-appearance of sir Alfred and young Beauchamp during the remainder of that day.

The following day, about noon, the baronet entered the dressing-room of her grace, having passed in his way thither several apartments, which a number of workmen were decorating and preparing for a grand rout.

"Sir Alfred, how happy am I to see you! Do you know, I was really terrified to death lest you would not return: and I should have been miserable had you been absent on my best night this season."

"Your best night this season, madam!"

"Nay, now don't look so strange—so *new*, as we say. You know well enough that I have sent out five hundred tickets to my friends, for a rout to night. Now, why does the good man shake his head and shrug up his shoulders in such a manner? My good sir, you actually now look the very counterpart of Kemble in Penruddock."

"Five hundred friends!—oh madam, madam! I was in hopes that——"

"Hope still, my dear sir, but don't expect miracles. Have I not vowed to you, that I *will* reform? Have I not already renounced dear hazard? Have I not declared that in future I will only play *pour passer le tems?* Have I not forsworn betting above a guinea on any occasion? Have I not even hinted, that it is possible that after this winter I shall turn dairy-maid, and never see London again? Come then, my grave, sage Mentor, dispel that angry frown, at least for to-night."

"Will it be more welcome, madam, in the morning?"

Ere the duchess could reply, her woman entered, and said that Mrs. Franklin, waited on her grace according to appointment.

"She calls for money," said the duchess, "and I declare I'm as poor as Job. What shall I do?—I shall certainly have money in a month. Ask her, Atkinson, if I shall give her a note at a month after date for fifty or a hundred pounds."

Atkinson withdrew.

"Now I dare say, sir Alfred, you marvel prodigiously at the idea of a duchess giving her note of hand: but the poor woman is in want, and I really owe her the money, having sold some beautiful embroidered muslin for dresses, the labour of herself and her daughters. 'Tis true I am responsible for the materials in the first place; I then make people buy who never pay me: but she, who was once in affluent circumstances, now almost starves."

" Yesterday morning I should perhaps have felt some surprise at hearing your proposition," said sir Alfred: " but the incidents of a single day sometimes impart more information to a man than years of dull thinking."

" There more is meant than meets the ear, my censorious friend," said her grace: " I can read some woeful tale, of which I am the naughty heroine, in those expressive eyes. But don't believe *all* the Drinkwater calumnies you hear, sir Alfred," continued she in a tenderer tone of voice; "and at least listen to what I have to say in mitigation of punishment, even for the blame which truth itself imposes. I may stand in need of discipline, dear sir; but let there be a medium betwixt correction and destruction; do not kill me by despising me: for, if I now lose your esteem, where is the friend to whom I can fly? What is to become of me, if, when hunted as I soon shall be from the gay world, retirement must be solitude?"

There was a wildness in her eyes as she spoke, which painfully impressed the sensitive mind of sir Alfred.

"Hunted from the gay world!" said he, attempting to smile. "No, my dear madam, you shall voluntarily quit it, with the dignity becoming the duchess of Belgrave."

"Ah, no, my good friend! Mine is the case of an unlucky speculator, who runs away from the scene of his disappointment and chagrin; and not that of the prudent merchant, who, retiring from the bustle of life, feels as much pleasure in retrospection as he has experienced in perspective.—But we are growing gloomy; and to-night I am to be the life and spirit of five hundred guests; at least so Neville will take care to announce in the columns of the Morning Post to-morrow."

Sir Alfred started at the name of Neville, and exclaimed:

"I would to God you would shut your doors for ever against that man!"

The duchess's countenance became ghastly.

"What mean you, sir?—Explain."

"At a period of more leisure, I *will* explain; for I *know him*. In the mean time be you, madam, under no alarm for the consequences of my discovery; your happiness is near my heart, and I trust you will be happy."

"You are incomprehensible: but though I cannot understand you, with perfect confidence I trust you. Do with me what you will—I almost wish I had not sent out a card—I shall never be able to go through the night—Neville will haunt me. Will you honour us, sir Alfred?"

"I will be your very shadow, if you command it."

"From my heart I wish it."

"That is the same thing."

"And your son——"

"I left him at Roseville House with Dr. Hoare. They will both do themselves the

honour of adding to the number of your guests."

"But this young rustic—I hope——"

"There is at present a shade of mystery over that occurrence; a few days will remove it, and I venture to say, the solution will reflect no disgrace on Alfred Beauchamp."

Here their conversation was interrupted, and they met no more till about ten in the evening, when the drawing-rooms began to blaze

> "With lights by clear reflection multiplied
> "From many a mirror."
>
> COWPER.

More than a thousand lamps twinkled in the various forms which taste had assigned to them. In the phrase of fashion—"The general splendour of the apartments was beyond description, and in the course of a few hours the company assembled exceeded all computation." In simple truth, the state-

rooms of Belgrave House were elegantly and superbly illuminated, and the apartments and even the staircases were crowded with company.

The duchess, amidst the perpetual and pleasing bustle of this scene, was quite a different personage from the duchess in her morning interview with sir Alfred. She was delighted at every new face that was introduced to her, and repaid with infinite grace and vivacity the compliments of her almost innumerable guests.

Her station was at the upper end of a large and splendid saloon, where she stood surrounded by her family, with the marquis of Arberry at her right hand, who studied to pay public attention to lady Susan, and sir Alfred Beauchamp, Mr. Beauchamp, and the Roseville family on her left.

The rest of the company formed a sort of ambling procession, one set of faces, and one group of feathers, were succeeded by others during several hours, with scarcely

any other conversation or notice of each other than, "How do?—What a crowd!—You look divine!—Where have you buried yourself?—Were you at the opera?—Do you go to the Installation?—When did you leave Bath?" and similar profound and interesting remarks and queries.

Some of the more agile or juvenile part of the male visitants found a slight relief of the dull scene by scrambling for ices or other refreshments; but the chief end of the visit was obtained by the company's looking at the rooms, nodding to the duchess, seeing who was there, examining the dresses of others, and showing to the best possible advantage their own. Some few exceptions to this general description may be noticed.

The earl and countess of Roseville chatted occasionally with the dukes of Delaware and Belgrave, who were stationary near the hostess. Young Beauchamp had repeatedly endeavoured to enter into conversation with lady Emily; but to every ad-

vance of this sort the mere monosyllable that fell from her lips was a heart-rending repulse.

The strange and unexplained rencontre which took place in the music-room of Belgrave House, had metamorphosed the conversable friend into a downright mute: but, while her lips and her looks spoke the chilling language of reserve, her heart, could it have told its emotions, would have said:—"Oh, Beauchamp! why trifles your tongue with such common-place remarks and observations? why does it not hasten to explain appearances that have destroyed my happiness, by exciting suspicions that may be altogether groundless? Yet if no blame, no guilt attached to this transaction, would he not seize with avidity the first opportunity of proving the propriety of his conduct? Ah, Beauchamp, either thou art not worthy of my esteem, or that esteem has ceased to be of worth to thee!"

Such was the soliloquy of her heart, while

her eyes, wandering round the splendid apartments, saw nothing of their grandeur, nor of the pageantry that filled them; while her tongue, scarcely conscious of its office, murmured "Yes," or "No," to the questions which Beauchamp from time to time addressed to her.

At length sir Alfred approached the sofa on which they were seated, and, addressing lady Emily, said:

"And so this is seeing company! Pray tell me, lady Emily, for what one rational purpose do these people come; or wherefore has her grace of Belgrave invited them?"

"Sir!"—exclaimed the lovely dreamer, starting.

The baronet repeated his question.

"Would you have me answer that question seriously, sir Alfred?" said she. "I should make but a feeble apologist for fashion, I fear; but I think full-dressed assemblies, as they promote the consumption

of a variety of our manufactures, are useful."

"I have no objection in the world to full-dressed assemblies," said sir Alfred; "but I should wish to see such crowds as these confined to public places. I am sorry, for that reason, to learn that Ranelagh and the Pantheon are exploded, and instead of them, to see private houses converted into public shows; while 'household joys and comforts cease.' All the good purposes of a rout were answered by Ranelagh and the Pantheon; without these ridiculous rivalships among people of fashion, in the size of their rooms, or the number of their guests."

"Here comes Neville," exclaimed young Beauchamp to his father. The duchess of Belgrave observed him, and involuntarily drew back. The duke stood near her.

With a confident and easy air, the captain approached sir Alfred.

"Ah!—How do, do, sir Alfred Beauchamp? Never have yet had the felicity of

congratulating you on the happy termination of your affairs. How completely we were all hoaxed by that abominable dog, that Belloni! A devilish clever *fello*, though, after all, or he could not have imposed upon us, your grace, could he? Lady Roseville, too, I declare!—May I presume upon the good intentions of my poor services, to have the honour of touching your ladyship's hand? I positively prophesy that Beauchamp Abbey will yet be inhabited by a Roseville." Then turning to the duchess he continued: "What a great general your grace is! Two new carriages for the birth-day, and not a creature to know the fact till the very moment of their launch! That was a profound stroke. I assure you they are the wonder and envy of all the world! Have you seen them, sir Alfred? They will be in to-morrow."

"In to-morrow!" said the duke of Belgrave: "why man, they are in to-day."

"In to-day!—Impossible. I have looked, and your grace must be deceived; they are positively not in."

"Why, zounds, sir, do you know the contents of my stables and coach-houses better than I do myself?"

"Coach-house and stables, my lord! Ha, ha! Egad, that's excellent;—your grace alludes to their being in the coach-house, and I to their being in the Morning Post!"

"Curse the Morning Post!" said the duke. "I believe you and the Morning Post will drive the town mad."

"Don't curse the Morning Post!" cried Neville: "Let me tell your grace, you might as well have gone to court in a wheel-barrow if your carriages are not described in the Post, as thus:—'Duchess of Belgrave a new coach, built by Godsall; the body painted Pomona green, ornamented with a silver Vandyke border all round the pannels; the frame-work richly gilt; the arms emblazoned in silver, in a crimson drapery, on doors and pannels; circular roof and corners, with

head-plates, and a set of very rich gilt joints, emblazoned with silver. Lining red morocco, trimmed with handsome silk Vandyke lace; elegant scarlet seat-cloth, with silver embroidery, and silk bullions and fringe. Built on a very light carriage, with Salisbury boot and hind standards, richly carved and gilt. The body supported from gilt springs, by four twisted serpents, finely painted to nature. The harness uncommonly rich; the pads and winkers covered with silver ornaments: the workmanship and sewing particularly neat."

"Mercy on us!" said sir Alfred, "and deliver us from the follies of fashion! But if these things were not so, what would so active an agent of the fashionable world as you are, captain, do for employment; putting fighting, of course, out of the question?"

"Talking of employment, my dear sir Alfred, reminds me of that novice there, your son! I can make nothing of him, he is so indecisive. Every thing will be

filled up in a few days, and all the interest in the world will not prevent his being shut out; and, for so fine a young fellow, that would be ten thousand pities; would it not, lady Emily? He forswears cards and dice, it seems, and therefore I do not think of White's or Martindale's; but I have got his name down for the Vocal Concerts, Hanover-square, for the Ancient Music, the Glee Club, the Amateur Concert, the Russell Rooms, and the Ladies' Subscription Ball."

"Are these all?" said sir Alfred: "I think there are many other subscriptions among which his name, as a young man of fortune, ought to appear, and with the objects of which it is but rational he should be previously acquainted; but to these I must myself introduce him, as I conceive they will not be altogether in your way."

"What can they be?—have I forgot any thing? Let me see:—Oh yes, there is, to be sure, the Opera."

"And there is Bedlam!" said sir Alfred.

" Bedlam !" echoed the captain : " what an odd idea ! Who would have thought of Bedlam in connexion with the avocations of people of fashion !"

" Sir, I was there a few days since, and whom do you think I saw there ?"

" 'Pon my honour, can't say ; I have no acquaintance with bedlamites !"

" That is because, when misery claims acquaintance with the victims of fashion, their dear five hundred friends all *cut*. But let me bring to your remembrance the name of Hetherington !"

" Hetherington !—What, the Hetherington !—"

" Aye, sir, *the* Hetherington—she who squandered, in one short winter's round of dissipations, a large fortune which a fond husband unfortunately left to her sole discretion."

" I do now recollect ; and your grace must recollect," said Neville, addressing the duchess. " Yes," continued he, " I remember the size of her drawing-room was the envy of the fashionable world ; it was

the largest and most superbly furnished in London!"

"And now," said sir Alfred with a sigh, "the only room she has is the gift of charity; it is just six feet by four: her splendid furniture is exchanged for a truss of straw, from which the poor maniac picks out single rushes, and, ranging them in rows around her cell, addresses them as lords and ladies, *duchesses* or *captains*; and when from charity she gains the favour of a pin, scratches on the pity-moving walls of her apartment uncouth imitations of cards of compliments—of invitation tickets to routs and masquerades!—'Oh, call my coach!' she screams: 'the room is suffocating. Pardon me, my dear, dear duchess! I was to blame in suspecting *your* kind heart. I know you have not got the money;—and so if that upholsterer cannot wait, why let him seize my goods:—oh, they are his already:—well, then, seize my person, and I will apply to Heaven for a *habeas corpus*.

God won't be cruel to me in adversity !—Why don't you call my coach ?—What ! do my very footmen grin and shake their powdered heads at me ? Who gave you these fine trappings that you strut in ?—was it not I ?—and now you refuse to stoop and give me a little water from the kennel !' "

" Poor Hetherington !" exclaimed the duchess.

" Poor Hethy !" cried Neville : " don't you remember, your grace, we used to call her Hethy ? I've often wondered what had become of her !"

" But, sir Alfred," said the duchess, in a voice of sweet compassion, " do not say this is in reality as you have pictured it !"

"Ah, madam," said he, " go visit this lady of fashion that was: see, believe, and feel !"

He spoke this with a significant emphasis.

" Go to Bedlam !" shrieked Neville : " upon my reputation, sir Alfred, you are the very climax of oddity !"

"I did not ask *you*, sir," said the baronet. "To reap any improvement from such a visit requires human feelings. I have another exhibition for you: pray, sir, were you ever in the Fleet?"

"In the fleet?—Why, do you take me for a captain of marines?"

"I mean the Fleet prison!—That, sir, is another of the sights to be seen in London, to which I mean to introduce my son."

"Egad, sir Alfred, yours is the oddest selection of diversions I ever heard of: the very idea of a prison gives one a nausea."

"And yet it is better to take a peep at a prison from motives of benevolence, or curiosity if you will, than to stay till the visit is forced upon us."

"I don't exactly conceive," said Neville: "don't comprehend, poz."

"I will explain," said the baronet.

"I had occasion to call upon an unfortunate debtor under confinement in the Fleet:

having transacted my business, I was quitting the prison, when, as I passed a gate that leads by a flight of stone steps into an open court, where the unfortunate captives take the exercise of walking, or playing at tennis, I stopped a few moments to contemplate the scene. My attention was particularly engaged by a tall thin figure that was walking up and down the court close under the wall: his air and gait bespoke the gentleman; by his face, I concluded he was scarcely thirty years old; and his dress might be said to consist of the wreck of a man of fashion's wardrobe. A surtout that had once been white enveloped him, and was tied round his waist with a silk handkerchief that had formerly been sported from the breast-pocket of this very great-coat. This *Belcher* girdle was not old; but being an *unique*, it had been so constantly in use that it exhibited most woeful marks of premature decay. Beneath the skirts of the coat were visible the

nankeen trowsers of better times, which now in a cold winter's day were worn rather for decency than warmth: a pair of thin silk stockings, a pair of dancing pumps, and a brown beaver hat, made up the whole of his habiliments, except indeed a muslin cravat, with the loan of which his neck had been obliged to accommodate his ancle, which had been bruised by a racquet ball. Now, captain Neville, can you recollect any resemblance to this picture?"

"Not I, poz,—not I."

"The description is something like what one would call a broken down Greek," said Dr. Hoare, "*vulgò* a black-leg."

"You have hit it exactly, sir; his story is worth your hearing: but, captain, don't you run away, you are interested in the tale."

"Some other time, baronet, some other time. I hate to hear preaching in such crowded congregations. Apropos of preaching, yonder is the Rev. Mr. Pink, whose thanks-

giving sermon, and the wonderful collection at his chapel for the Patriotic Fund, I engaged to get elegantly noticed in the prints; and curse me if the stupid dunce of an editor did not put it in the puffing corner, with two lottery squibs and a wonderful cure of the gout by electricity! I must fly and make my peace: so adieu—adieu!"

"We *must* soon meet again," said sir Alfred with an emphasis.

The conversation now relapsed into an insipid common-place, until one after another the carriages were announced, and the company departed home,

"Their flambeaus flashing 'gainst the morning skies."

CHAPTER VI.

THE MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

PARLIAMENT was now sitting, and a political question was at this time in agitation, of such extensive importance, that not only were the family seats of the nobility and gentry all over the country deserted by the flight of their owners to London, but even naval and military commanders for a time threw down the truncheons to assume the toga.

The parliamentary business which had thus "drawn all the world to town," was of a most peculiar nature, involving the reputation and interests of some of the most powerful individuals in the state.

It is not within the province assigned to these light pages, even to glance at the nature

of this question; but it is necessary to state, that its decision was considered by the earl of Roseville to be so replete with important consequences, that from the moment of its first agitation he devoted his entire attention and the whole of his time to that one object. Whether private interests and private friendships, or whether public zeal and patriotic motives, were the springs of his lordship's conduct, must be left to the decision of far graver historians.

While lord Roseville was thus occupied, his amiable countess, with the tenderest anxiety, was watching the progress of a powerful passion in the heart of her daughter.

Hitherto, she had not deemed it necessary to enter into any conversation with lady Emily on the painful subject; painful she felt it, because she had every reason to believe, that though the marquis of Arberry had withdrawn his pretensions, it would not be long ere the earl would select some new

suitor of equal wealth and rank, and equally indifferent to his daughter.

His attention to the political world had for the present averted this new persecution; yet still she dared not for a moment indulge the wish nearest her heart, that of beholding her beloved daughter united to the son of him whom she had once considered as her destined husband.

It had therefore been her task to appear blind to that passion which she could not notice with approbation, because she could not encourage with hope; for should all the rest of mankind stand aloof, she feared that lord Roseville would never so far triumph over his prejudices as to give his daughter to a youth, whom he had himself reared as an object of charity.

The countess felt also the peculiar delicacy of her daughter's situation in another point of view. The whole town had rung with the attachment which was

stated to subsist between young Beauchamp and lady Emily, and yet no declaration direct or indirect had ever been made by the supposed favoured lover. To have entered therefore upon the subject to lady Emily, would have implied a bestowment of her affections, unasked, upon an object who perhaps might never solicit them. Thus, though parental love awakened her to a painful sense of her daughter's situation, delicacy forbade the administering of that consolation which her heart yearned to bestow.

Lady Emily herself, with all that delicacy of sentiment which formed so lovely a feature in the character of her mother, shrunk with alarm from the painful thought, that as Edward Montagu, or as Alfred Beauchamp, the object of her heart's esteem had never once suffered a sentence to pass his lips which could be construed into any feeling beyond respect.

But hope never employs a more powerful agent than the voice of love; and whenever that unwelcome recollection struck her mind, the alarm which her delicacy suffered was quickly soothed away by a thousand flattering excuses for his silence. It was her heart's most delightful dream to persuade herself of her influence over him; and the language of his eyes, the speech of innumerable little attentions, were therefore constantly in her remembrance, and afforded her an infinitely sweet satisfaction in the idea, that the formality of a direct declaration was only delayed in obedience to some prudential motive.

Such was precisely the state of their feelings, when the mother and daughter, attended by ladies Paulina and Selina, had entered the music-room at Belgrave House; such especially was the state of lady Emily's heart, when the strange appearance of the rustic *Incognita*, and the mysterious sentences that followed, occasioned their hasty retreat from so unexpected a scene.

It was with great difficulty that the assiduities of the countess and her friends preserved her from fainting in the carriage; and no sooner had they arrived at home than she was conveyed almost senseless to her chamber.

It was now that the duty of a parent superseded all other considerations in the mind of the countess; and she resolved to embrace that opportunity of entering upon the subject of her daughter's attachment. When therefore the lovely sufferer had in some degree recovered from the shock, and only languor, modest alarms, and tears remained, the affectionate mother dismissed every attendant; and apologizing for the request of even their absence to ladies Paulina and her sister, she sat down on the couch, and, causing lady Emily to recline her flushed cheek upon her bosom, embraced her with a warmth of affection that at once bespoke her apprehensions and her love.

"And are you not angry, dear madam, with your foolish child?"

"Angry! my love. Is it from you I hear that ugly word? And to whom do you address it? To a loving mother, than whom your own heart cannot be a more tender, a more partial confidante?"

"Oh, you are all goodness, all tenderness, and I am to blame—yes, very much to blame—in not confessing every thought, however foolish, however——"

"Spare yourself, my love, this effort,—spare yourself the pain of a declaration which is not necessary. I know well the trials of your heart; I know the painful struggles it has undergone."

"Oh, dearest madam, say not that; do not tell me that," said the blushing lady Emily, burying her face still deeper in the bosom of the countess. "Ah, surely, surely I have never suffered the fatal secret to escape my lips! No—no—even in that horrible moment, when——"

"No, my love," said the countess, interrupting her; "no, not even in the moments

of delirium did a sentence or a word issue from those lips, the repetition of which would occasion you a blush."

"That is a consolation for which I can never be sufficiently grateful; for indeed I have sometimes trembled with the apprehension of what might then unconsciously have stolen from my heart."

"Banish that fear for ever, then, my dearest Emily. But still, though your lips have never uttered a sentence of complaint, think you a mother's anxious heart could remain insensible to the more expressive language of your looks? When, struggling with an attachment for the gallant youth to whom you are indebted for your life, you strove with silent resignation to yield your own sense of happiness to your parent's wishes, do you imagine that the sighs you were unable to suppress, told nothing to a mother's heart? Though you were dumb, the faded roses in those cheeks, the dimmed lustre of those eyes, the total absence of that

charming vivacity which so delighted me,—all these, my Emily, spoke to a mother's feelings with more powerful eloquence than ever words displayed."

"Oh, then you knew my weakness! Ah, was it right, dear madam, to dissemble with me? While I was struggling to conceal my own unhappiness, lest it should render you unhappy, I must have appeared a detected hypocrite; and yet never by one word, of counsel or of anger, did you give me to understand you were acquainted with my folly!"

"Call not the impression which merit made upon a heart of sensibility, and alive to gratitude, a folly or a weakness, my dear child. I should have blushed for the heart of my daugher, if the important services which the gallant Beauchamp rendered her, had not kindled in her bosom a fraternal regard; and I should have felt no less surprise than shame if she could have denied the tribute of esteem, which an acquaintance with his virtues and

his talents cannot fail to create in the minds of the intelligent and the worthy."

"Oh, till this hour, dear madam, he was to me an object of more than mere esteem!"

"Who could behold the combination of so much virtue and so many graces, and deny the homage which they challenged!" said the countess. "Such a modest spirit; and yet so frank, so generous, and brave! Such unobtrusive talent! Such unassuming grace! Virtue in his person spoke and looked so lovely, that I can never bring my mind to think vice can have taken up a residence in the same form. Rest not, therefore, my dear Emily, the future security of your heart upon the supposition of its having been bestowed unworthily; for, notwithstanding appearances, I venture to pronounce that Alfred Beauchamp will still prove worthy of his sire."

"Grant it, Heaven!" inwardly ejaculated the heart of lady Emily.

"No, dearest child," continued lady

Roseville, "on firmer basis let your peace be built. Released from an union in which your sentiments and affections were unhappily too little consulted, be grateful; and even should this youth of whom we speak, without a speck on his fair fame, offer you his hand and heart, remember that you have a father!"

Lady Emily shuddered at the ideas connected with that word.

"Enough, enough, dearest madam: I know, I feel all that your tenderness would suggest. But do not doubt your daughter. I own—— Yes, to you, and you only, I acknowledge, that in my estimation, the preserver of my life stood very very high. Nay, more: I dare not conceal, that, with the preference which my heart has cherished for Mr. Beauchamp above all mankind, there are mingled a pleasure and a pain it never felt before. It glows with joy at mention of his praises; it bleeds with anguish at the bare

supposition of a blemish on his name and reputation: it covets also an inordinate share of his esteem and approbation in return: it has revered his opinion as a rule of conduct, and it has made his pleasure a motive of my actions. Yes, in the fond, partial bosom of a mother I may whisper this confession, and tell, how large a portion of this heart was filled with Alfred Beauchamp!"

Here she paused; and the affectionate mother, with tears of tenderness and joy, embraced her lovely and ingenuous daughter.

"God be praised for the ecstatic pleasure of this moment!" said the countess. "This confidence, my love, is a rich reward for every care and every pang that as a mother I have ever known. Happy the parent who is enabled, by the ingenuous avowal of a daughter's choice to modulate by counsels resulting from experience, the sweetest chords of the human heart; which thus regulated constitute the harmony of life;

but which, wild and unattuned to the social duties, too often become the springs of fatal discord!"

"How much more favoured a daughter, then, am I to be blest with such a mother! such a friend!"

The remainder of their conversation tended to confirm the impressions of unbounded confidence in the heart of both mother and daughter: and thus, while the latter reaped present relief to her feelings, and an added force of delicacy and propriety for the regulation of them in future, from this candid declaration of the state of her heart, the former obtained the satisfactory assurance, that, by a constant and unobscured introspection of that heart, she would be enabled to administer with precision the various remedies which experience, reason, and religion afford for the mind's disease.

The most conspicuous sentiment in the heart of her daughter, which now presented itself to the vigilant eye of lady Roseville,

was a mixture of love and jealousy. The incident which had occurred in the music-room, was constantly in the mind of lady Emily. If for a moment she permitted herself to connect the idea of a criminal attachment on the part of young Beauchamp to the incognita, the thought was madness, and she instantly repelled it. Still it would recur; and day after day passed on without the occurrence of any event that tended to throw the least light on the mysterious cause of her painful anxiety.

On the night of the duchess of Belgrave's rout, she had entered the mansion where she was to encounter young Beauchamp, with a trembling sensation of hope and fear. "If he is guilty, I shall read it in his confusion, or even in his silence," thought she; "for, if innocent, will he not invent an opportunity of exculpating himself from the aspersions which he must be aware attach to such appearances?"

It has been seen, however, that from the

duchess's rout she retired without any abatement of her apprehensions of his guilt ; but with a new feeling of wounded pride, resulting from his apparent indifference to the conclusions which she might draw from his conduct. Delicacy, she was aware, forbad any direct allusion to the transaction ; but there were a thousand indirect methods of which she felt convinced he might have availed himself, had an explanation been his object.

CHAPTER VII.

THE OPERA.

IT was proposed to visit the pit of the opera for the purpose of affording ladies Paulina and Selina a better view of that magnificent spectacle than could be obtained from the countess's box, which was in the lower circle near the stage.

Accompanied by the duchess of Belgrave and her daughters, and under the protection of the marquis of Arberry and lord Barton, the countess of Roseville, lady Emily, and her Italian friends, repaired on this occasion most unfashionably early to the Opera House.

Business had occupied sir Alfred Beauchamp and his son abroad during the whole of the day. It was nine o'clock when they returned to Belgrave House, and learnt that the duchess and her party were gone to the the opera. The marquis of Hartley, who was to have attended his mother and sisters, but had been detained too long over the bottle, arrived at the same time, and insisted that young Beauchamp should dress, and, as he expressed it, accompany him on duty. The baronet remained at home.

The curtain had dropped at the close of the first act of "*Gl' Orazzi e Curazzi*," before they entered the pit.

The loud volubility of Neville attracted the attention of Beauchamp as they arrived about the centre of Fop's-alley, and he perceived the party into which the fluttering fop insinuated himself. He immediately joined them: his eyes met those of lady Emily; they exchanged respectful glances

at the moment, but the latter instantly shrunk from the gaze of the former.

Beauchamp's whole attention was now absorbed by lady Emily: he forgot entirely that he was standing, for the first time, in the centre of the most magnificent theatre in Europe; he forgot that the eyes of hundreds were fixed upon him, while his were riveted on the countenance of lady Emily. He thought she appeared ill; her face was pale; her eyes were languid; she was pensive; she listened not to the conversation of her friends; and her replies to the remarks specially addressed to her betrayed the absence of her mind. As Beauchamp contemplated her interesting and expressive features, he could not help exclaiming to himself—"Her mind is not in this scene:—with what—with whom, then, is it occupied?—Dare I flatter myself with the sweet hope that on me she bestows any portion of her thoughts? Flatter myself, did I say!—Good God! perhaps it is a feeling of pity,

not of scorn, with which she now regards me as the unprincipled seducer of innocence!"

Much longer would he have remained a statue in soliloquy, had not the commencement of the ballet interrupted his reverie.

The prattle that had engaged the attention of the party was now hushed into silence; and their eyes were turned towards the stage, which for a few minutes engrossed the mind even of a lover.

The splendid dresses and highly finished scenery, the admirable machinery, the grand effect of harmony produced by a numerous band of masterly performers, added to the astonishing efforts of the votaries of Terpsichore, seized as it were the faculties of the young novice captive, and fettered them with admiration. His astonishment at the agility of Hilligsberg was succeeded by delight at the grace and ease of the Laborie; and both wonder and delight were united when he beheld the attitudes of Parisot; as

la Fille Sauvage, in the celebrated mirror scene.

The silence of the numerous assembly was only broken by monotonous exclamations of—"Admirable!"—"Divine!"—"Oh the delightful creature!" until the curtain dropped; when Neville, who was the neighbour of Beauchamp, exclaimed—

"Is it not superb—great?—Is not The Parisot a divinity?—Are you not enraptured?"

"I am highly gratified," replied Beauchamp.

"Oh, my dear sir, without that inimitable *pas seul* the piece would have perished; all the rest is an insufferable bore."

"It has impressed me differently," said Beauchamp: "my pleasure has resulted from the admirable combination of all parts of the scene: I think the grouping, if I may use the expression, even of the *figuranti*, an essential part of the dance, which if executed with less taste and skill, would

have detracted from the beauty of the whole."

"Petrify me, if, by your remarks, I should not be led to think you were describing a Claude or a Titian!"

"I judge a ballet precisely upon the same principles I would a picture," replied Beauchamp.

"A ballet a picture!"

"Yes; it is that, or it is nothing: and when a new and happy design of the ballet-master is correctly executed by the artists; when enchanting melodies of sound are in unison with the expressions of countenance and gesture; and when beautiful scenery is represented in correspondence with the action; —I am of opinion that the production merits much higher encomium than is usually bestowed upon a ballet."

"Petrify me, if D'Egville is not infinitely obliged to you!" said the captain. Then, turning away with a yawn indicative of the weariness which his mind experienced

in attending for a minute to any thing like argument, he addressed the duchess of Belgrave—

"Petrify me, if I have not forgot whether your grace said you should honour the Park to-morrow or not."

"How amazingly you must have been interested in the decision!" said the duchess.

While a conversation ensued, in which scandal of the absent and flattery to the present were the prominent features, young Beauchamp attempted to draw lady Emily into a discourse of a far different description. Vain, however, was the effort: a monosyllable was the chilling and unvarying response which fell from her lips.

The countess, by inquiries concerning sir Alfred's health, and the nature of the engagements which had for the last days so entirely engrossed his attentions, plainly evinced a desire to relieve the situation of them both; and more than once Beauchamp thought that her design included the

offer of an opportunity for an explanation of the music-room adventure. More than once, indeed, a prelude to explanation hovered on his lips; when a recollection of the unfitness of the time and place for a long story, which it necessarily involved, repelled the impatient desire with which his bosom laboured to acquit himself in the estimation of both the countess and her daughter.

From a subject of so much interest he was therefore compelled to return to the common-place incentives of discourse; and it was with pleasure that he again saw the ascent of the curtain for the second act of the opera.

In the profound and delighted attention which lady Emily and young Beauchamp bestowed upon the stage, there was the most striking sympathy. It would have been difficult to have selected from the thronged assembly two other persons equally interested by the powers of music. The effect

which Braham's powers gave to the exquisite composition of Cimarosa enraptured them. Every tone of pathos or of dignity which Grassini sent forth impressed them with responsive emotions; and the majesty of her deportment, and the fine Siddonian expression of her countenance completed and confirmed the sentiment which the poet and the musician had engendered.

If in the bosom of either there was room, during their appearance, for any other feeling than delight and admiration, it was only when vexation or disgust were inevitably obtruded by the interruption which the conduct of their neighbours occasioned to the gratification of refined taste, and feeling.

At times, the loud jargon of the pit and boxes, though conveyed in the affectation of whispers, accompanied by titters from ladies, and ha, ha, ha's from gentlemen, completely overpowered the orchestra. To such a climax

of incongruity indeed had fashion decreed the behaviour of the company with the ostensible cause of the visit, that the silent attention with which Beauchamp regarded the opera became a subject of mirthful wonder to several quizzing beaux and simpering misses.

By this time fops'-alley was crowded almost to suffocation. The throng was greatest near the orchestra, not far from which the Roseville and Belgrave parties were stationed. They were quickly discovered by a party of young men, who, with Charles Torrington at their head, were making rather more rapid advances than politeness warranted to get near the stage.

At length, to the mortification of Beauchamp, and the annoyance of every one who was desirous of hearing the performers, they carried their point, and stationed themselves near captain Neville.

From that moment there was an end to all the pleasure resulting from the talents of

Braham and Grassini; and for which the conversation of the intruders was a very sorry exchange.

The flushed faces of these youths of fashion betrayed their recent orgies at the shrine of Bacchus, and their subsequent conduct was an admirable sample of the fruits of such devotion.

To the untutored ears of Beauchamp, the dialect of these young men was in a great degree incomprehensible.

The dance after the opera had begun, when several of these arbitri elegantiarum were regulating their stop-watches, and comparing them.

"I say, Neville," said one; "you must lend us your aid;—we shall do the Bishop, depend on't!"

"Pray," said Beauchamp, to the captain, "what is doing the Bishop?"

"O, you'll soon see," replied another of the party. I hope, sir, *you* are not one of the Suppression-of-Vice jockeys?"

"Upon my word, sir," said Beauchamp, "that is a species of jockeyship I am not yet acquainted with; but if it be the jockeying of vice, or hunting down of immorality, I wish success to the jockies with all my heart.

"The devil you do!—But you may rely upon it sir, we don't stand it," said lord X——.

"What, in the name of every thing odd," said lord Y——, "should the Bishop have to do with us? We never interfere in the management of their churches;—they may shut them up entirely for aught I care; but to grudge us a paltry encroachment of half an hour, upon their own day as they call it, is abominable."

"But do you know, Harry, that these suppression chaps intend to enforce the penal statute, and compel us to go to church!" said lord Y——.

"Lord, how monstrous shocking!" said a young lady. "Pray, sir, do you think they *can* do such horrible things?"

"We shall see!" said one of these cham-

pions of the rights of the people of fashion. "If we suffer ourselves to be dismissed in the middle of our entertainment because it happens to be half past twelve o'clock, we shall deserve all the puritanical restraints of the days of Cromwell!"

"Lord, how frightful an idea!" said the young lady. "I'm sure if the gentlemen have the least spirit, they will fight for our privileges rather than suffer such a barbarous innovation on our amusements. Only think, lady Emily, the Opera is really the only place left to us where one can meet all the world; for people now shut themselves up at the Playhouses in private boxes like sinners in a confessional. There's no dear Ranelagh,—no Pantheon; and if they rob us of the Opera, one might as well be in Siberia!—for if one had the sweetest dress in the world, who is to notice it, unless one gets once now and then invited to a grand rout of one of the leaders of ton? I'm sure all the world ought to be obliged to the dear duchess of Belgrave and one or two more; for, if it were not for their charming

crowds and the Opera, one should never see any faces but those of one's own ugly relations from January to June. I suppose that makes the watering-places so vastly attractive, don't you think it is? I should think public libraries, and auctions, and raffles, and such things, would be very successful in London."

"But remember the suppression gentlemen, my lady," said lord Y——, interrupting this voluble lady.

"Oh, the brutes,—don't name them!"

Here their conversation was interrupted by the sudden dropping of the curtain, which was the signal for the commencement of a scene of tumult and disorder unparalleled in the annals of the fashionable world.

Until that evening, the most fastidiously delicate, the most nervous and most timid of the fair sex, concluded themselves as much protected by the statutes of decorum in the pit of the Opera-house as in their own drawing rooms. Over that favourite rendezvous of the great and the fashionable, where a

rigid adherence to etiquette compels the company to appear full-dressed, and from which the mere negligence of wearing boots instead of shoes is an absolute expulsion, the very spirit of politeness might have been justly supposed to reign. Against such a supposition, it might indeed be argued by a novice, that the loud interruptions which the entertainments of the stage constantly meet with from almost all parts of the pit and boxes, are not much in the spirit of politeness, as far as regards the performers or such of the company as are desirous of being amused by their talents. A slight acquaintance with these matters would, however, soon convince him that a very large majority of the assembly visit the Opera-house without the least regard to the opera: and, as in all societies, the voice of the majority necessarily establishes the law, it is not to be considered as an infringement of the rules of politeness, if a poor solitary amateur, who is listening with rapture to the strains of

Billington, Viganoni, or Braham, finds himself surrounded by a coterie of ladies discussing the merits of a new fashion or a new milliner; or beset by a party of gentlemen from the British, inflamed with wine and patriotism, and wrangling at the same moment on some new bill in Parliament; some new face or fortune in the market; some new pigeon on the turf, or some fleeced one in the Fleet. Custom, it will be found, had long licensed this annoyance, and had, as it were amalgamated it with the amusements of the place. But it was reserved for the present winter, and the present evening, to introduce in the pit of the opera a *row*, in the lowest sense of that vulgar word; and to add to the list of fashionable pastimes, the demolition of chandeliers, the destruction of valuable music and musical instruments, and the exhibition of patrician prowess in pugilistic contests on the stage with scene-shifters and candle-snuffers.

At the first indication of this riot, lady.

Roseville's party quitted the theatre; yet even then the press was so great in the lobby, that before they could reach the coffee-room, lady Emily, still weak from her late illness, and greatly alarmed by the disgraceful disturbance, fainted in the crowd.

"For Heaven's sake," exclaimed the countess, "stand back; my child faints; she will be killed!"

Beauchamp, relinquishing the hands of ladies Paulina and Selina, who had each hold of his arm at the moment, rushed forward and caught the fainting Emily in his left arm; and buffetting the crowd with his right, he supported her to a sofa in the coffee-room. The countess and her friends followed as closely as the throng permitted: but love had lent such energies to Beauchamp, that he was in the coffee-room two or three minutes before them. Three gentlemen, locked arm in arm, stood near the spot, and with perfect *nonchalance* contemplated the scene.

"For God's sake procure a glass of water!" said Beauchamp.

The appeal was vain: fortunately it was unnecessary, as the women in attendance in the coffee-room brought water and harts-horn immediately. Ere they could arrive, however, Beauchamp had with an imperious earnestness repeated his demand, adding, with scorn, "Were you men, you would fly at such a sight!"

The three immoveables still stared in silence at one another and at Beauchamp, till the middle one exclaimed:—

"What the devil does the fellow mean?"

"To be impertinent, major," said the second.

"He must apologize," said the third.

This scene had passed with such rapidity, that Beauchamp and his lovely burthen were never out of the view of the Roseville party; and just as the last sentence was finished, the countess had joined them, fol-

lowed by her friends and a crowd whose curiosity was excited by the bustle.

The indignation that was ready to burst from the lips of Beauchamp he with an effort suppressed, in consideration of the feelings of the countess. He however heard the major address a gentleman near them :—

" Pray, my lord, do you know that young bird ?"

" That's the son of sir Alfred Beauchamp."

" Is he so ?—then I presume he is a man of honour, and I must wing him."

" Fie, fie, major," replied the other, " no, —you must not notice the effusions of love and alarm."

" Is it love ?" said the major. " Oh, then by St. Patrick, I must ask pardon myself, and be sorry into the bargain." And then with perfect coolness the major and his friends marched away.

Too deeply interested in the situation of lady Emily to regard with the least attention

this threat or its abandonment, Beauchamp remained anxiously waiting near the sofa, which was now surrounded with ladies; until the duchess of Belgrave at length announced her recovery, when he flew to order the carriages. On his return to announce them, he was accosted by the marquis of Hartley:

"Beauchamp! you are a dead man, by G—! Do you know who you have affronted? No less celebrated a shot than major Dart, who has fought as many duels as there are days in the year, and never missed his man. If you come off with an arm or an ear less than you have it will be well for you, for he has levelled half a score at least!"

"For his sake I trust you are romancing; —but silence, here are the ladies."

CHAPTER VIII.

HYDE PARK.

THE next day, while the bells of the neighbouring churches were ringing for *afternoon* service, the court yard of Belgrave House was crowded with horses, carriages, and grooms, in preparation for the Sunday *morning* amusements of the Park.

The marquis of Arberry sported a new barouche landau, with four beautiful piebalds, which were the objects of universal envy among the dashing votaries of notoriety. In this carriage he drove the duchess of Belgrave and her daughters.

The triumphal entry of Alexander the Great into Babylon could scarcely cause a more intoxicating rapture in the ambitious bosom of the conquering hero, than this en-

trance of the duchess into Hyde Park raised in the breast of that triumphant leader of the fashionable world.

Fortune smiled on her that day with more than common favour; for just as the duchess of Drinkwater, in a landau and pair, drove in at the Piccadilly gate, the outriders of the marquis, who had entered the Park through Grosvenor gate, dashed by the heads of her grace's horses, and were followed like a dart by the prancing piebalds, which the marquis manœuvred a minute or two till the whole cavalcade which formed the train of the duchess of Belgrave, consisting of half a score of carriages, joined up in close rank, and passed, with provoking triumph, the mortified duchess in her stationary landau.

To increase the humility of the moment, the marquis of Hartley and lord Barton, who were equestrians, pranced their nags, each with two grooms behind them, close up to the landau, and consoled her grace. Though

burning with envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness, her grace attempted to laugh out the scene.

"Was ever any thing so provoking!" said her grace: "I told my stupid coachman, as distinctly as possible, to drive to Brompton, where poor lady Mary Marriott is dying to see me; and lo where he has brought me! as if ever *I* appeared in the ring with a pair!—It's a fine thing to have patience," continued she, picking a very expensive muff to pieces, and throwing it about the carriage:—"a very fine thing to be patient, or I should immediately horsewhip that lout of a coachman for his stupidity."

All this the poor Jehu of her grace patiently listened to, without any other retort than lifting up his eyes to the clouds, and whistling to himself "Lord how this world is given to lying."

Another string of carriages had by this time joined up to the cavalcade from Belgrave House, and the situation of the poor

duchess seemed almost hopeless of relief, when suddenly a loud coarse voice exclaimed—

"Hollo—what's this!—the duchess of Drinkwater at a dead sett! Dash forward, sir Felix, and break the line: I'll support you. You keep the rear division in play, while I attack the van; and, in the mean time, do you, Jarvis, whip into the vacancy."

This harangue, half seaman, half sportsmanlike, it may be supposed proceeded from the rude lungs of some boatswain on horseback. It came, however, from the lips of a lady. The duchess turned round to thank her deliverer, in whose voice she recognised lady Jane Johnstone, the widow of an Irish baronet, whose devotion to the bottle had proved a more fatal sport than his lady's to the turf or the field; at least her neck had lasted longer than his brains.

"Ten thousand thanks, dear lady Jane;

but I have got hedged up by a blunder of my coachman. I want to go to Brompton to visit a sick friend."

"Psha!—Brompton!—sick friends!—nonsense!" exclaimed lady Jane. "Or if you must go moping with sick folks, drive through the Park, and out at Kensington."

At this moment there was a vacancy, and they got into the ring.

"Who is it that is ill?—why don't they get on horseback?—never know sickness then, would they, sir Felix?"

Sir Felix Fascinate was in the train of her ladyship. Her fortune was estimated at five thousand a year; and he had therefore resolved, after marrying and divorcing a majority of his patients, at least to put himself in a situation for a chance of divorce, by submitting to a marriage.

"If every one we saw on horseback reminded us as powerfully of its beneficial

effects as lady Jane Johnstone does, I should wish the practice universal," said the physician in reply to her ladyship.

"And why is it otherwise?" said lady Jane:—"because half the insipid things you see mounted on horses ride for parade instead of exercise. Look at the two Miss Stukelys ambling along the Row, as demurely as undertakers before a hearse; and yonder 's gawky Miss Vernon, with such a *pretty* riding-dress, so *nicely* spread over the hind quarters of a little ugly Welch poney, that she reminds one of the procession of great girls, on little donkies, at the watering places. Zounds, what's the use of an animal with blood in it, like this mare of mine, to such poor puppets as those?—a chamber horse, or a swing in the nursery, would be more in their way:—wou'dn't it, sir Felix?"

Sir Felix nodded approbation.

"That's a very clever gelding of yours, Hartly," continued this jockey lady, addres-

sing the marquis; "but your friend's galloway for my money."

"Lord Barton—lady Jane Johnstone," said the marquis, introducing them.

"Son of the earl of Roseville," whispered sir Felix.

"What say you to a wager, gentlemen," said her ladyship: "you perceive there's nothing showy about this mare; but I'll gallop her against lord Barton's galloway, or the marquis's roan gelding, for any sum you'll name, from a hundred to a thousand!"

"Done, for a cool hundred," said the marquis; "name your own time."

"Now, this minute."

"No, hang it, the Suppression-of-Vice people would then have good cause indeed for endeavouring to shut up the Park entirely, if we were to convert it into a Sunday race course," said sir Felix.

"It's been done a hundred times: however, to-morrow be it then," said lady Jane:

" and yet it's hardly fair so soon, for neither poor Meteor nor I are quite recovered from our fall."

" What fall?" said the duchess.

" Have n't you heard of it?" said lady Jane. " Why you are a very pretty devil, now, sir Felix," smacking her horsewhip against his boots, " to run all over the town with every-body's stories but mine. Captain Neville would have made the town ring with it. I'll tell your grace how it was. You must know, everybody swore my neck was broke; and a confounded stunning to be sure it was. It was at the last subscription Essex hunt: Charles Torrington was steward:—by the bye that blade dashes most confoundedly:—I hear he has bought Jack Nettleton's pack, for a sum large enough to frighten his grandfather out of the grave; and has built kennels for them upon a scale as expensive as the Prince's stables at Brighton—Well, Charles was steward:—he is a

princely fellow, to be sure;—and we had all the world there. The morning was everything that could be wished, and the deer was started with every prospect of affording the finest sport.—Charles Torrington had betted highly on my being in at the taking of the deer. Well, over hedges and ditches we scampered, and Meteor and I kept alone at the heels of the hounds.—The day was our own in everybody's opinion, when that blind buzzard, sir Harry Hawker, who should only hunt with the bats, suddenly turning the corner of a thicket, came spank against the hind quarters of my mare;—down came Meteor on her knees;—and heels over head went I full swing.—You'll scarcely credit it—but, in the act of performing the somersets, I contrived to keep hold of the bridle, and in less than a minute and half I recovered myself, and vaulted again into the saddle.

While this conversation passed in one part of the ring;—in others, discussions were carrying on, on the last night's opera;—on

the entertainments that were given last week, —and the parties fixed for the ensuing one.

The countess of Roseville, with her daughter, the ladies Paulina and Selina, and Dr. Hoare, occupied one of the carriages in the cavalcade of the duchess of Belgrave; as the earl and his family were among the guests invited to partake of the grand dinner given that day by the duke.

"This is a pleasing spectacle," said lady Selina; "What an innumerable train of carriages!—what troops of horsemen!—And is this park thus thronged every Sunday?"

"Generally so, during the winter and spring," said the countess. "Later in the season it will, if possible, be more crowded. At the west end of that walk, which you perceive is filled with pedestrians, is the entrance to Kensington gardens. When they are open, they form a fashionable promenade every fine Sunday, from the hours of three to five; during which time they pre-

sent a scene that cannot fail to inspire the beholder with feelings of wonder at the opulence and splendour, as well as the population, of our metropolis. I have heard it has been computed that in the gardens and park one hundred thousand people have been at one time assembled."

"There is nothing like it in Europe," said Dr. Hoare. "The public promenades or rides in France, under the new as well as the old *regime*, presented you with such a contrast of tawdry finery and squalid misery, that contempt or compassion were the only sentiments they inspired. In Spain, again, the solemn *hauteur* of the grandees;—their ponderous state equipages;—in short, the whole weight of their magnificence, is much too heavy for the mind of an Englishman, to whose liberal feelings the obsequiousness and servility of the lower orders are also disgusting.—But here, how different!—Look, ladies, at that plump-faced gentleman in a brown close-curled wig and a cocked hat,—

him, I mean, in the blue coat and red waistcoat,—with his spouse hanging on his arm, and his son and daughter parading before them. That man I happen to know; and he is but one copy of a class of five thousand. He is an honest brazier, who with his family all the week long labour at their calling with patient industry; but on the Sunday he is as independent as the first nobleman in the realm; visits in the morning what church or chapel he pleases; dines in his best parlour; and then takes the air, as you perceive, with as much freedom, and more enjoyment perhaps, than any one here."

"The unrestrained intermixture of ranks in your public places," said lady Paulina, "is a remarkable trait of your national manners."

"And a glorious one it is," said Dr. Hoare. "It is, however, like every human blessing, open to abuse. For instance:—Do you observe a young man mounted on a gray charger, a little to the left of that

large tree? The style and figure of his horse and caparisons, and his own dress and appearance, would class him in the estimation of strangers as a man of independent wealth. Now, the fact is, that the horse is his master's, who is an eminent distiller, and a cornet in a volunteer regiment of cavalry. He is at Bath, and his clerk has made free with the use of his horse. To my knowledge, the bulk of his personal property consists of buskins and boots, a frilled shirt or two, and a few coats and waistcoats: the air of the park will procure him an appetite, but the dinner that is to satisfy it will occasion his wits some ingenuity to obtain.—But a few masqueraders mingling in this scene does not detract an iota from its general character. Though here and there we shall find a mantua-maker assuming the dress and aping the manners of a lady of quality; or an apprentice from the city in the costume of a man of fashion—still the natural reflection, resulting from a contemplation of this

gay and moving picture, must be,—happy and prosperous people! whose laws protect the enjoyments as well as the rights of the lowest among you; and whose customs are so liberal, that there is no public resort to which the peer can have access, while the citizen is excluded! In the succession of elegant equipages that roll round this scene, you are not doomed to gaze at a race of tyrant nobility, or haughty ecclesiastics! If in one coach you see the family of a duke who have inherited without labour the estates of their ancestors, the very next that follows it will, in all probability, be that of some industrious and fortunate trader, whose splendour, instead of discouraging, animates the spectators, as an emblem of the reward which in this free country is held out, without exception, to the industrious and the enterprising. Let, then, the puritan enclose himself if he will, and shun the scenes we now contemplate. For my own part, I enjoy them; for

I love to see innocent smiles upon the face of society."

During the remainder of the drive the conversation turned on the story of sir Alfred Beauchamp; Dr. Hoare having observed that the baronet had that morning imparted his intention of retiring from the metropolis to the Abbey in the course of a week or ten days—

"Does Mr. Beauchamp accompany him, doctor?" said lady Emily; and, instantly recollecting herself, blushed deeply and held down her head.

"Allow an old fellow like me, and among friends, as we all here are, to tell you that I am angry at that shame. What is there in the character of Alfred Beauchamp that is not praise-worthy? He was once, it is true, a dependent upon the bounty of your parents; and while such was his lot in life, the duties which you owe to society forbade you to cherish those regards which

now the daughter of a duke need not blush to acknowledge."

"Doctor! doctor!" said lady Roseville, frowning.

"And madam! madam!" continued Dr. Hoare. "Why you don't suppose I have lived all these years in the world to be ignorant of those symptoms which I have so often discovered in this young man and woman. I appeal to ladies Selina and Paulina—nay, to your own self, madam, if I have not a weight of evidence on my side. I will not go back to the sympathy of childhood, when soft pity first spoke in that bosom where love was to follow; but I may be allowed to allude to the impression which that sympathy must have made upon the heart and imagination of a boy, who, several years afterwards, could trace from memory that face improved to beauty's ripe maturity. Neither will I positively assert that gratitude always begets love; but I cannot help thinking, when a female of sensibility happens to be indebted for the preser-

vation of her life to a tolerably handsome and very accomplished young man, that it requires more stoicism than falls to the generality of the sex—(I beg your pardon, ladies)—I mean to say it requires a very great share of philosophy to discipline the heart, and say, 'you shall be grateful, but you shall not love!'"

"Doctor, I must interrupt you;—you never before so much surprised, I was going to say offended, me," said lady Roseville. "To say nothing of the philosophy of the Stoics, or any other sect, there is a code of laws which my children have been taught to consider divine; one of the most important branches of which is a mandate to 'honour their father and mother.' And when the will of a father is known to be contrary——"

"Mercy! mercy!" interrupted the doctor; "Oh my stupid head,—my poor, addled old noddle!"

"What do you mean?" said the countess.

"I have been talking, madam, as if it

was no secret that lord Roseville and sir Alfred Beauchamp had last night had a meeting, when, after a consultation of more than four hours, it was at length agreed that——"

"That what?" exclaimed lady Emily.

"Why, that is the secret," said Dr. Hoare, "which my blundering head had almost revealed. However, thus much I will venture to tell,—that I should not have said so much as I have, did I not entertain a well-founded hope that two young persons, who I know are worthy of each other, may ere long be united, without any breach of the fifth commandment!"

Here the carriage stopped at Belgrave House.

"Good heavens!" inwardly ejaculated lady Emily; "Do I dream!—Can it be possible my father would ever consent——!" At that moment the recollection of the scene in the music-room burst upon her mind, and she alighted from the carriage with a sigh.

CHAPTER IX.

A PENITENT.

AS the party entered the hall of Belgrave House, lady Emily, by accident or design, cast her eyes towards the door of the music-room. At that instant it opened, and sir Alfred and Mr. Beauchamp appeared, followed by the very young woman who had occupied so large a portion of her thoughts.

She was now attended by an elderly woman, dressed in very clean but poor apparel, and a rough-looking sea-faring man, about four-and-thirty years old.

"Ladies, your most obedient:" said sir Alfred. "Give me leave, madam, (to the countess) to introduce to you an old acquaintance, whose features you have in all probability forgotten."

"I do not call to mind—and yet—is it not the wife of the good fisherman, who——"

"Yes, indeed, and please your ladyship, madam," said the young woman, "it is my mother; dame Laurence, ma'am."

"What——"

"Yes, my lady," said the man, "it is indeed our mother, dame Laurence, and I be Jem Laurence, the same as your ladyship gived a guinea to for just helping a bit or so in trying to save that young gentleman from drowning."

"Astonishing!" said the countess.

"Yes, my lady, it is wonderful, to be sure," replied he, "that things should ha taken such a turn; but the little baby be grown so fine a gentleman, and you be grown so venerable-like, and I be grown up to take poor father's place you see, and mother be grown oldish, and this sister here was not born at that time, when your ladyship and the grand company comed to our garden;

and so it is no wonder much we don't know one another."

"And your father—!" said the countess, with an inquiring eye.

"Ah, poor father be no more! my lady," said Laurence, squeezing his hat as he held it between his hands. "The winter afore last was a main trying one for poor mother, here. It pleased God to *inflict* us all with what they call a *putrified* fever. Mother and Fan, and another brother, weathered it after a long bout of sickness, but father and poor Sally, whose clothes this brave good gentleman wore that terrible night, and two little brothers that *was* between Sally and Fanny, all died in the course of five months one after another. It was heart-breaking, my lady, but it was God's will, you know, and he strengthened us to go through it, so as to give them all a decent burying; for we had the bell tolled for every one! Hadn't we, mother?"

"Yes, my dear boy, thanks be to a good God and a good son, I struggled through the whole bravely; and if it hadn't been that we *was* obliged to part with our boat——"

"Part with your boat!" exclaimed lady Emily, who had listened to this artless narration with the warmest interest.

"Yes, miss," said the young woman, "that was the cause of all my sorrow (holding the corner of her apron to her eyes.) If Jem could have kept on the boat, mother and he and I should never have parted; and then——"

"Hush, Fanny, hush, don't be troublesome to the gentry," said Laurence.

"Troublesome!" exclaimed lady Roseville, drawing her hand across her forehead. "But why did you part with your boat?"

"Ah, my lady," said dame Laurence, "great folks don't know what draw-backs upon little yarnings and savings sickness and burials makes. *Potecarry's* stuff and wine and nourishing things run away with all we

had put by; and all our silver spoons, Jem's buckles, my silver watch, and every thing went before my poor dear husband died; and then when we come to have undertaker's bills and other debts to pay, there was no other way than to break up, and so we sold the boat and paid every one their own."

"But didn't the parish——" said Dr. Hoare.

"Your pardon, sir, your pardon," said Laurence, "I could work; it was not so bad as that, thank God! I soon got my strength, and could work. I hope no offence to your honour, but you see I could work."

"Offence, thou brave fellow! Give me your hand," said the doctor. "How few of our fashionable skip-jacks, who pride themselves on their courage in firing a shot or standing to be fired at, possess a spark of that spirit which justly entitles you to the character of a man of honour."

"You are pleased to joke, sir, said Laurence; and indeed such a happy day as this

is we should not go over old grievances to make oneself sorrowful. Fanny has been married to-day, sir, and this young gentleman, God be ever good to him, has——"

"Silence, silence, Laurence," interrupted Beauchamp. "Remember what I have told you."

"I wish to pay all obedience to your commands, sir; but if my heart will thump out a word of its joyful thanks, you must pardon me.

"Fanny, I will answer for it," said young Beauchamp, "has got a good husband; Mr. Henderson will by his future conduct not only redeem his own peace of mind, but be a source of happiness and comfort to his wife, to her excellent mother, and her brave, honest, and truly honourable brother!"

"Why if so be that Mr. Henderson can forget the blows and the cudgellings I could not help giving him, we may, to be sure, be better friends for knowing one another's mind," said Laurence.

"You have to forget injuries of a deeper nature than a blow," said Beauchamp. "You have nobly resented the dishonour of a sister: he has evinced his penitence, and as far as possible repaired the injury he inflicted. You have convinced him, by your offered hand and friendship, that you can forgive as nobly as you can resent. From this time, therefore, be brothers, and be happy!"

Joy, admiration, and surprise were blended in the expressive countenance of lady Emily.

"A Beauchamp! a Beauchamp! a true Beauchamp! by my soul a true Beauchamp!" exclaimed old Adam, who stood tottering at the side of Sir Alfred.

"What a horrible noise the old man is making," said Neville, who had just skipped out of his chariot into the hall, where this scene was performing! "Bless me, what are you all playing at puss-in-a corner, here, or are you rehearsing for a private play?"

"The latter, sir," said sir Alfred Beau-

champ. "You are in the piece, and are arrived just in time to take your cue. Mrs. Laurence, you and your son and daughter will step into that room, we shall send for you presently. Mr. Osborn, lean on my arm; you have no part in the drama, but your heart is so excellent a judge of the proper effect to be produced on this occasion, that there is not a critic whose good opinion I am more anxious to obtain. Now, ladies and gentlemen, if you please, the next scene will take place in the duke's library! Shall I lead the way!"

"The duke's library!" said Neville, taking out his watch, "petrify me if I didn't frighten my coachman out of his wits to be here in time for dinner. Pray, lady Roseville, what riddle-me-ree is this?"

"Oh, it will explain itself, sir," said the baronet, "all plots are better unravelled by action than narrative."

The doors of the duke's library were thrown back: at the upper end of the room the duke was seated at a writing-table; the

duchess, leaning on her elbow with her handkerchief to her eyes, sat on his right-hand, her two daughters standing behind her chair; on his left sat the duke of Delaware, and next to him the earl of Roseville. Chairs were placed for the rest of the company, which consisted of the whole of the Belgrave, Delaware, Roseville, and Beauchamp families, with ladies Selina and Paulina, Dr. Hoare, captain Neville, and Adam Osborn.

As soon as the whole party had entered the library, sir Alfred closed the doors, and requested Dr. Hoare to sit on one side and Adam Osborn on the other.

Neville was panic-struck at the ceremonious assembly, and the solemnity visible on every countenance:—he looked at one and then at another without being able to speak; his tongue cleaved to his mouth, his knees shook, and his face looked pale as a spectre.

A short pause ensued.—At length, sir Alfred Beauchamp, said:—"Captain Neville, at the request of the duke of Bel-

grave I have undertaken to state to you the cause of the present meeting. You see assembled three noble families, besides my providentially rescued son and myself, an old and faithful servant of my father's family, and the confidential friends of the earl of Roseville. The access which the fashion of the present times has opened for you into the bosoms of some of the first families in the kingdom, it is to be feared you have, in more than one instance, availed yourself of for purposes the most abandoned. It is, however to your connection with the noble family of Belgrave that I shall principally confine myself; it is to expose the arts and the crimes by which you have destroyed the peace of mind of the duchess of Belgrave, that the present company are collected; every one of us being interested by ties of relationship already connected or about to be formed, or by feelings of friendship and regard, in rescuing her name from unmerited reprobation, and releasing her from the most

dreadful state of bondage into which the human mind can fall!"

"Sir!—sir Alfred!—sir Alfred Beauchamp!—sir!—I don't understand," hesitatingly said the captain, gaining courage as he proceeded, "I can't conceive the right—that is—— whatever charges falsehood or malice may bring against me, I shall never suffer to be repeated with impunity, especially, sir, in such a company as the present."

"Forgive the interruption, captain Neville; believe me, humanity dictates it. Do not inflame yourself with such false courage; so plain, so incontrovertible are the proofs to be adduced against you, that in proportion to the baseless elevation on which you totter will be the ignominy of your fall."

"I dare you to your proofs, sir, of any thing dishonourable on my part towards the duchess of Belgrave. If her grace has suffered herself to be so ill directed as to occasion this public discussion, she can only have herself to blame for the consequences."

"Let me first put you right in that respect, and then I will proceed to my charges and proofs. The duchess of Belgrave, captain Neville, knew not till her return from the park this morning, the intention of this meeting; nor, besides lord Roseville, the duke of Belgrave, my son, Dr. Hoare, and myself, has one person present an idea of my proceedings. Having assured you of this, upon my honour, I would now call to your recollection the names of Hetherington and Henderson, which I mentioned at her grace's rout."

"Well, sir, and what to me are either the bedlamite or the confined swindler?"

"Oh, captain Neville,—pause—reflect before you speak further on the subjects connected with these names! Reason has, indeed, deserted the one, and deprived her of the power of declaring who was her destroyer. The laws of his country, you feel confident, imprison the other, who de-

pends upon the precarious supply of your charity for his daily food."

"Is that my crime, or his, sir?"

"He shall answer that question himself. Come forth, Mr. Henderson, and under the protection here afforded you, state to this company, without exaggeration, and without palliation, your own unvarnished story!"

As he spoke, the baronet opened the door of a small study in the library, and Mr. Henderson appeared.

The duchess of Belgrave shrieked and almost fainted, but was recovered by the encouragements and attentions of all present; while Neville, biting his lips with rage and tottering with apprehension, turned his back towards the company, with difficulty supporting himself on a chair.

The appearance of Henderson was now the reverse of the picture which sir Alfred had described at the rout:—his old dancing slippers and thin silk stockings were ex-

changed for a pair of thick worsted hose, and a pair of stout shoes tied with leather thongs. He wore a suit of plain brown cloth, and a silk handkerchief was tied round his neck.

" The situation in which I at this moment stand," said Henderson in a faultering tone, " I feel to be at once the most humiliating, and the least encouraging, in which a human being can be placed. What can humble a man more than his own declaration that he has been a villain!—or how can he expect to be believed, whose own mouth condemns him as the most practised of deceivers!

" The motives, therefore, which have impelled me to my present task are not, can not be, selfish. From this noble auditory I expect indeed that candour which is inseparable from high minds, and that charity to human frailty which the least culpable among men are most inclined to feel for their erring brethren: but even candour

must mark me for a criminal, and charity itself will be scarcely able to mingle one sigh of pity with the clamour of contempt. It is not then the vapouring vanity of one struggling against opinion, and fearing to sink in human estimation—it is not the silly hope, that palliative eloquence may gloss over crime, and restore a culprit to his lost rank in social life, that urge me to the confession I am about to offer to this company. The seal of my past conduct has received its final and indefaceable impression: I am not a prisoner on trial; my verdict has been issued, my sentence has been pronounced; and the narrative I am now to relate is delivered not as a defence, but in the same spirit, as if the angel who cuts the thread of life now hovered over me, and only waited for its close to perform his office.

"I am the eldest of five children who were left to the care of my widowed mother, when I was fourteen years of age. My father, who was a clergyman, had a curacy

in the north of England, on the slender income arising from which he supported us all with decency, and on me had bestowed the elements of a liberal education. At his decease, all that he had been able to accumulate for his family was a policy of five hundred pounds, in a life-insurance office in London. A neighbour, for we had no relations, undertook to lay out this sum in the purchase of an annuity during the life of my mother, reserving first out of it forty pounds, to be paid as a premium to an attorney at Oxford, who, at the recommendation of our neighbour, consented to receive me as his indentured clerk.

" For three or four years I was as happy as innocence and content could make that season of life. My employer was a moral, but liberal and an indulgent man. The habits of the family were genteel, and the duties of my station were rendered light and pleasurable. I had parts, which my good master

saw and encouraged to a certain extent; but frequently warned me against the indications of an excursive fancy, which he called giddiness, but which, unfortunately for me, some associates of my own age were pleased to style genius.

"Volumes might be usefully occupied in exposing the danger of instilling into a youth the idea that he is a genius. I have not time to detail the various anecdotes which, in my intercourse with the young men of Oxford, gained me this appellation; but the impression that I was a genius soon spread its baneful influence over my mind. The plodding duties of my station; the tame unvarying customs of our peaceful house; the humble prospect of drudging through life as an attorney's clerk, ill suited with my new feelings as a genius. The pleasure I had before felt in the recollection that I supported myself without being an incumbrance to a widowed mother,—the gratification I had

hitherto experienced when, from the produce of working over-hours, I could remit my brothers and sister sa small present,—and the hope resulting from the fruits of future industry in my profeſſion, all now vanished from my bosom to make room for ill-directed, and wild, unsettled feelings of ambition.

" It was at this dangerous period, when the influence of my earliest-imbibed principles began to diminish, that chance threw me into the society of lord Rundle. He was nearly of my own age, wild and eccentric, possessing brilliant talents, great vivacity, and, being an only child to a widowed mother, was completely his own master.

" He was nominally of New College when I was first introduced to him, as a genius who wrote plays and spoke prologues; and, unfortunately, so much was his lordship captivated with my talents, that he insisted on my accompanying him, in the vacation, to his uncle's, the marquis of O——: " where

the most dashing doings," said his lordship, "are going on."

"I pleaded my indentures; he laughed at my slavish ideas.—I spoke of my mother; he swore he would make my fortune and my mother's too.—I should myself get into parliament for one of his boroughs, as soon as he was of age; my brothers should be ensigns or midshipmen; and my sister we should portion among us.

"Let not the experienced in life measure the conduct of a boy of eighteen by their present estimation of mankind, but by the glowing hopes and feelings of their own bosom at the same age.

"I must be brief. Lord Rundle prevailed.—I ran away from my situation at Oxford;—my master in disgust sent me my indentures,—and I half broke my mother's heart by a letter which I intended should give her the utmost joy.

"We arrived at the 'Wilderness,' which was the name of the marquis's seat, and there

I practised, at the pressing desire of lord Rundle, my first deception. He swore I must pass for the son of some person of consequence, and introduced me to his uncle and his mother, as Mr. Henderson of Oriel college, the son of a man of fortune in Ireland.

Now opened wide a field for my ambition. Among the amusements of the Wilderness, private theatricals were pre-eminent: I had a passion for the drama—I played several characters,—I wrote occasional addresses,—and, in short, was so useful an addition to the party at the Wilderness, that I became a favourite with lords, earls, marquisses and dukes—was flattered and applauded to the skies.

"The vacation however had an end; and when lord Rundle was about to return to Oxford, the necessary question occurred—Whither was I to go? I consulted lord Rundle,—he laughed—the affair to him was a joke, I might turn player, or a thousand

other things. For the first time I then saw my error:—to retrieve it by retrogression was impossible:—I became grave and thoughtful as the time of departure from the Wilderness drew nigh. I had not five pounds in the world. London, that general rendezvous of the unfortunate as well as the enterprising, seemed to be the only place whither I should bend my way.

"I remonstrated with the young lord on the consequence of this frolic, but his levity would not suffer him to feel it. I resented his conduct by harsh language; and he was ungenerous enough to retort, by threatening to expose me to the party at the Wilderness as an impostor who had practised on his good nature and induced him to deceive his uncle.

"I flew with disgust from the place that contained such a monster.

"Such was the nature of my first plunge into a vortex of errors, one following the other with such velocity, that now, when my

giddy senses have recovered themselves, my heart sickens at the deeds I have done.

" It is not necessary to recount, and it would, to this present, be far from pleasing to listen to the gradations by which I sunk from folly to vice.—I will simply state, that in London I became again acquainted with captain Neville, whom I for the first time saw at the Wilderness.—He found me in the character of a venal writer—a hireling pamphleteer and paragraphist.—Accursed be the hour that we met!

" Till then, though my means were meagre, and my occupation humiliating, I had not parted with my peace of mind,—for till that fatal hour I had kept possession of my integrity!—I will not trespass on the time and patience of this company by repeating his arguments, or recounting the bribes he proffered;—I did not, no! Heaven knows I did not, fall an easy victim to his artifices,—his deep laid schemes for the

debauchery of my soul!—Let it suffice to state, that from a mean apartment in a narrow lane, the munificence of captain Neville placed me in a sumptuously-furnished house, clothed me in the style of a man of fashion, introduced me to fashionable connections, and admirably soon initiated me in fashionable vice!

"For what purpose it will be asked did Neville this?—In the nefarious game which he was playing he wanted a dependent partner—one, who would be villain enough to rob and plunder at his command, and yet fool enough to take just such a scanty portion of the spoil, as his avarice would deal out to him! And, good God, do I live and acknowledge that I became that tool—that mean—that meanest of all things—a lacquey-rogue—an under-strapper in vice—a wretch let out to crime for hire!

"Pardon this emotion," continued the unhappy Henderson, after a short pause,—

"I need not specify the acts to which that master in iniquity directed my services of infamy. You are not ignorant, my lords, that in this city there are *gentlemen*, who being protected from arrest by the privileges of parliament, and having neither property nor credit, find it difficult to raise money on their individual security: to several such *senators* Neville was the agent, and I was the tool;—bill, bond, or annuity—'twas all the same to me. What signified it to me that the poor tradesman rotted in jail, duped, swindled, and robbed of his property by my connivance?—*I drank champagne with senators!*—What was it to me, that the splendid mansion of a woman of fashion was stripped by her creditors after her fortune was lost at hazard, in which plunder I also assisted?—Though by my means the Hetherington, who was once idolized by the fashionable world, now abandoned by all, raved in the asylum of lunatics, my conscience never rebuked me—

no, for *I drank champagne with senators!*

"Conscience! did I say?—O, that the echo of my words could now be spread through every avenue of this vast metropolis! then might my example save some hesitating youth, who, pausing between the warning admonitions of a yet friendly conscience and the glittering temptation of HIGH CONNECTIONS, dreads to relinquish the paths of Honesty, and yet sighs to mingle with men of brilliant wit, of fascinating manners, and high and fashionable notoriety! Dash to the earth, O youth, the intoxicating cup that is presented to thee; for thou art lost for ever, if once its deleterious sweetness fasten on thy lips. The poisonous ingredients of the chalice are concealed from observation: flattery swims on its surface, and pleasure is the predominant flavour, till vanity and sensuality urge deeper and deeper the draught; and then in the dregs, too late, are discovered qualities that will render the rest of existence a torment,

and the prospect of dissolution the worst of horrors.

" Pardon—I ramble—I must restrain my feelings: I must confine myself to facts, and to that more immediately which is the object of this meeting. Among other victims which this harpy had selected for his spoil, was that illustrious lady, whose presence ought with the force of lightning to strike to the ground both Neville and myself. I am not here to varnish over the errors of the duchess of Belgrave; but it is an act of justice to declare that she has been far, oh, far more sinned against than sinning. Time does not allow me to relate the artifices by which that villain first stole into her unsuspecting confidence, nor to unfold the dangerous state of equipoise between vice and virtue in which her heart then vibrated. All the world knows how much the duchess of Belgrave courted, nay worshipped, notoriety; but all the world knows not the enormous sacrifices which she was compelled to offer to the

priests of that empty worship. Take one fact:—At the instigation of captain Neville, and from notes written by himself, and now in my possession, I, in the delirium of guilt, compiled memoirs of her grace, which Neville actually caused to be printed; then taking to his giddy dupe a copy of the infamous, scandalous, and libellous, performance, told her a tale about his influence with the author, whom he represented as an agent of the duchess of Drinkwater, and, for a bribe of five hundred guineas, engaged to stop the publication. Of the money thus extorted I received—to my eternal infamy be it spoken—fifty pounds, and the remainder yon captain pocketed:—and yet we slept!"

"O God of heaven!" exclaimed the duchess, clasping her hands in agony.

"One more anecdote closes my task," resumed Henderson.

"A long run of ill luck, and other causes, occasioned captain Neville abruptly to quit England. At the time of his departure bills,

to which I had set my signature for his use, to the amount of many thousand pounds, were in circulation. I fled from London with no other resources for my subsistence than my hands and head. Honest labour never once occurred to a guilty wretch like me. Afloat on a sea of vice and indolence, a return to virtue and independence was a vision never to be indulged. I wandered about the kingdom for a length of time with a company of the lowest order of comedians. Last summer we played at a small village near Ryegate, where I became acquainted with a young female, whose seduction I have to add to my other crimes! Sometime afterwards the newspapers informed me of the return, and renovated splendour and fashion of captain Neville.—I flew to London—was discovered, arrested, and thrown into the Fleet, where to this hour I should have remained a prisoner but for the miraculous interposition of that benevolent youth and his father in my

behalf. Letter after letter I addressed to that wretch on whose account I was confined; but he was too deeply engaged in new schemes upon the property of others to pay the least attention to the distresses of those, whose criminal agencies had assisted him in his old ones. At length, when I had relinquished all hopes of hearing from him, I received this letter, which is of the utmost importance to the object of this meeting:"

'Henderson,

'You are damnably teazing:—You must know me well enough to be assured that I only waited for an opportunity of serving you:—I now have it; and with only a small portion of your former skill you will be a flying bird in a few weeks.—I have a scheme for the plucking as fine a pigeon as ever perched in the purlieus of St. James's—full feathered, and as blind as an owl.—It is the son of lord Roseville, the great banking fortune.—I have 'em all in a net. Our old bird, the duchess, though scarcely a fea-

ther of her own is left, will be useful in our plan;—and there has one of the best decoys I ever met with in the course of my experience actually tumbled into my hands:—I am now at her house in Portman-place;—a foreigner, and a dowager;—by name, lady Beauchamp.

'I have inclosed you a five pound bank note. Send a list of the detainers against you to Ferret, the attorney, who has my directions to see about bail and obtain your flight.—If things go on, as I hope they will, you shall this winter retire with an annuity for past services, and go and repent like a good old sinner in some corner of the American continent, out of the reach of bailiffs and attornies. Adieu!

'A. NEVILLE.'

"The meaning of the latter part of this letter," said Henderson, "is, that I should be enabled to run away from the bail which his attorney was to procure. Here my task

ends:—the remainder of the tale will be better told by others."

"Call in Laurence," said sir Alfred.—"Now, my good friend," said the baronet, "tell the company, in your own way, *all about your sister and Mr. Henderson.*"

"To be sure I will," said Laurence.——"After father's death, mother went out acharing and washing, and so on:—Sister Fanny went to sarvice at a farmer's near Ryegate:—Frank, he went 'prentice here, through a friend, to a carver and gilder in London.—I had some thoughts of going to sea myself; but Joe Dawson of Brighton offered me a proposal, which I accepted of, to take a share in a fishing-boat with him; and so we all jogged on pretty well, till poor Fan's misfortune was discovered; when she was sent home to mother, who lived with me at Brighton. We was in the midst of our misfortunes when that beautiful letter comed down to Brighton from his honour squire

Beauchamp there, to Mr. Donaldson, at the library, to find out our family :—and to make short work on't, we all set off to London, according to his honour's directions, and went to that public house or what-d'ye-call, in Piccadilly, where he was to come to us, and so we sent for Frank, who was out of his time last month, for his honour to see us all together. Lord I shall never forget when he comed grown so grand and so handsome, how we all stared; but he had us in one of the grand parlours and talked to me, and Frank, and Fan, just as if he was our brother, and then paid mother as much affection and humbleness as if he had been her own son. He axed us all our history, and when poor Fan came to tell her story, instead of scolding or lecturing her, he spoke for all the world like a pitying angel, and swore he would see her righted, in such a tender manner as made us all blubber like little babies. He then bid us good bye for the present, and told Fan to keep up her spirits, and he would come to

her again in a day or so. But, as luck would have it, the next day, as Frank went to see a friend in prison, Fan and I, who had been looking at St. Paul's and the sights, went with him into the jail, and who should poor Fan see but her ——, I mean this Mr. Henderson.—She fainted away, poor soul, and I knocked down Mr. Henderson; and, begging his pardon for mentioning it, I think I did a brother's duty in giving him as sound a bruising as man ever got in his life.

"When we got back to our quarters we told mother all about it, and cogitated what to do; when, in the afternoon, there comes a chap with a letter from Mr. Henderson, as we had told him our good luck in his honour's goodness; and told him, moreover, that if he would marry Fan, his honour would, no doubt, do something for 'em, in putting 'em forward in the world.—But when the letter comed, we all thought he had repented and agreed to the match; instead of which, there was a bit of paper, signed by

some duchess I think it was, who promised to give to the bearer fifty pounds in two months, which, this Mr. Henderson said, was to be quits for sister's virtue. 'No, damn it, Fan,' says I, 'that mustn't be, neither.' So, after much argufication, we agreed that it would be best to go and show it to his honour Mr. Beauchamp, and ax what was to be done. We got his honour's name printed on a bit of paper from the landlord, who showed Fan the house where he lived, and—"

"The rest is known to the present company," said Mr. Beauchamp: "you may retire, Mr. Laurence, for the present."

"Your grace," said sir Alfred Beauchamp, addressing the duchess, "recollects the singular appearance of the young woman, and the emotion it occasioned in my son: that incident induced him to consult me on the subject of your grace's note of hand, which this captain had procured from you, and remitted to Henderson, to be applied

to the purpose of equipping him once more as a man of fashion, as a decoy, to plunder the heir of the earl of Roseville. The gratitude of my son to the family of the benevolent fisherman fired him with an invincible eloquence in pleading the cause of virtue and of Fanny Laurence; and, thanks to God, there was yet remaining in the breast of the poor guilty Henderson a latent spark of keen remorse, which that eloquence kindled into a virtuous flame."

Such was the scene which sir Alfred Beauchamp had planned for the development of the nefarious schemes of captain Neville; and the consequences of this solemn and public exposure of so depraved a character were such as his benevolence desired, and his experience had promised.

Debased to the lowest level of human degradation, the detected culprit Neville hung his head abashed before his fellow-creatures, and, with humiliating thankfulness, was compelled to compromise the punishment which

the law would have awarded him, for an immediate and voluntary exile for ever from the shores of Great Britain.

The wretched implement of his impositions and extortions, Henderson, though, in comparison with his tutor in vice, he might be deemed an innocent and happy man, was, nevertheless, a conspicuous example of the fatal effects resulting from ill-directed talents. Aware that the union into which he had entered with Fanny Laurence was dictated by justice and not by choice, sir Alfred, in his benevolent arrangement, had wisely provided that Henderson and his wife should reside under the roof of Henderson's mother; who experienced the joy of receiving her prodigal son, after having for ever yielded up all hopes of his reclamation from a state worse than death.

The duchess of Belgrave at first sunk under the weight of mortification, which such a scene could not fail to occasion to a woman of her strong feelings. It was long ere the reasoning of sir Alfred, or the affectionate

assiduities of her husband and children, could arouse her from a state of sullen despair.

Several days elapsed, during which she refused to quit her apartment; and the most serious apprehensions began to be entertained that the effects of sir Alfred's scheme would prove fatal, if not to the life, to the intellects of this victim of fashion.

"Time—Time must be her physician," said the baronet, in reply to a serious address of the duke on this subject, "I rejoice in the symptoms that alarm you—Had she suffered less, a relapse might have been dreaded, but now the crisis is over: I have a remedy preparing which will work wonders in the restoration of her grace; and it is in the power of lord Roseville and yourself to hasten the preparation, so that it may be almost immediately administered."

"Explain, sir," said the duke.

"Thus then, my lord:—You cannot be ignorant of the affectionate attachment (which has grown into what young people call love) that subsists between my son Al-

fred and the daughter of the earl of Roseville.—I have the pleasure to announce to you his lordship's consent this day obtained to their union. The marquis of Arberry waits only your nod to be blessed with the hand of your daughter lady Susan.—Now then this is my medicine for the mind of the desponding votary of fashion.—Let us instantly marry these young people, and run away with the duchess into Cumberland.—The delightful pictures of domestic bliss, which she will then behold will chase away all memory of the departed shadows that she has too long courted. When she contemplates the union of two families converted from rivals to relations; when she sees the old oak Hall at Beauchamp Abbey crowded with the elegant inhabitants of Roseville Park, and the superb modern edifice of Roseville filled in return with the old-fashioned family and servants of Beauchamp Abbey—she will feel the reality, the substance of enjoyment. We will make old Adam dance, and it shall give her more delight than she ever received

from seeing Vestris;—the little cottage where Virtue and Mrs. Enfield reside, and where my dear Alfred was reared, shall afford her more rapture than she ever experienced in the triumph of her most crowded routs;—we will tell old stories alternately at the Abbey and the Park till even the fascinations of the theatre shall appear mere trifling, in comparison with the interests of real life; and in short we will all be so rationally happy, that no individual in the circles of Beauchamp Abbey and Roseville Park will think with regret on the scenes which have passed during this WINTER IN LONDON."

In the course of a few weeks the events to which the baronet alluded took place; and the youth who had quitted Cumberland, an unknown orphan, then returned the beloved heir of sir Alfred Beauchamp, and the happy son-in-law of the earl of Roseville.

FINIS.

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